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# THE BRITISH YOKE

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## *Reflections on the Colonial Empire*

**BY**

E. W. EVANS

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# CHAPTER I

## THE DEPENDENT EMPIRE AND COLONISATION

“ COLONIES are the seeds of nations, begun and nourished by the care of wise and populous countries, as conceiving them best for the increase of human stock and beneficial for commerce.” So wrote William Penn, admiral’s son, coloniser and Quaker, more than two hundred and fifty years ago. Earnest and enthusiastic words ; and true enough of the writer’s own Pennsylvania and of the sister colonies on the continent of North America. True enough of all the thirteen colonies which separated from the mother country in the great schism a century later. But hardly true of the island colonies across the Atlantic which, being islands, could not have seceded in defiance of British naval power even had they so wished. These survivors of the first British Empire are the senior members of the present-day Dependent Empire. They are generally thought of and described as the West Indies though some of them, notably Bermuda and Bahamas, are careful to dissociate themselves from this description.

In the West Indies, which is now the western fringe of the Dependent Empire, as on the American continent, seed was sown by Britain from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards. But little of the seed that fell on West Indian soil was the authentic seed of Britain. Authentic British seed amounted to no more than a first few handfuls. The rest, regularly scattered for two centuries or more, was of an exotic variety. It came from the west coast of Africa until the final sowing, in which the seed was derived from Southern Asia. Small wonder that the pattern of the West Indies is freakish in its colour scheme. Culturally the pattern is European, or mainly

so. Demographically it is negro with more than a dash of Asian and only a few white streaks.

Across the history of the West Indies the slave-trade is written large. This lucrative traffic, in which the highest in the land participated, made the West Indies in more than one sense. It created the prosperity of the sugar plantations and it settled the main character of the human stock. Even the final sowing of human seed was part of the aftermath of the slave-trade ; a sequel to the victorious campaigns of Wilberforce and his fellow emancipationists. In the first humanitarian campaign the slave-trade was abolished ; in the second, the institution of slavery as an integral part of society. A migratory movement came to an end after nearly two centuries of steady momentum. Slaves were no longer transported from West Africa to the West Indies, and the slaves became free men. But servile labour had to be replaced. For its replacement another migration was set in motion. Fresh seed was scattered on the soil of the West Indies. While at home the Industrial Revolution was giving impetus to the great diaspora of the British people, spreading authentic British seed on the soil which now sustains the self-governing Dominions, Indian coolies were taking ship to provide cheap labour for the sugar plantations of the West Indies. Henceforth India becomes a contributor to the people of the Dependent Empire. Wilberforce and his associates rank high amongst the involuntary designers of that Empire.

Thus the senior British dependencies, in and around the Caribbean Sea, derive their blood hardly at all from the seed of William Penn's mother nation, but from miscellaneous African and Asian seed. " Best for the increase of human stock. . . ." So Penn went on to write. The seed sown on West Indian soil has certainly not lacked fecundity. On the contrary, it has been too prolific. It may have come near to exhausting the soil on which it was sown, leaving neo-Malthusians to ask whether pressure

on means of subsistence based on agricultural industry has not been too severe. In the struggle for existence the Asian has fared better than the African. This is obvious enough in dependencies like Trinidad and British Guiana where Indian and negro are together in more or less evenly balanced numbers. But the progeny of the Indian coolie, and that of the negro slave, have not been evenly handicapped. The Indian coolie, however drab his antecedents, at least had no long legacy of servitude. He was less brutally transplanted. He was able to carry with him the ballast of his domestic and social habits. If he had to leave behind the ashes of his fathers, he could at least re-erect the temples of his gods across the seas. The negro slave, on the other hand, was stripped of his past and plunged into servitude, naked, with no life-line to grasp. His language, his customs, his arts were taken from him. He had to be born again, like a man who has lost his memory through shock—and in forbidding surroundings. A few fragments of his African past can still be identified; some odds and ends of magic and the beat of the drum with which his descendants have been able to enliven the dance-halls of the jaded descendants of their European captors. The critics of the West Indian negro, who deplore his fecklessness, his indiscipline, his incapacity for self-help, his persistent sexual promiscuity and, consequently, his intractable avoidance of the sobering restraints of stable family life, should rather marvel that so many men of servile ancestry have shown talent and character of a high order in the service of the community. But both history and geography have withheld from the western dependencies the stuff of which nations are made. These territories have not even raised their status in the world by uniting in a single confederacy.

“Beneficial for commerce . . .” In the West Indies commerce has meant, first and foremost, the cultivation of sugar. The world is now haunted by the spectre of



famine. Competent authorities predict that during the next quarter of a century the world will need to double its food production. But their talk is more of oils and fats and of rice than of sugar-cane. The West Indies are not amongst the lands which are part of mankind's undeveloped estate. When the competent authorities wonder how shortages in the world's food supply may be made good, they look elsewhere. Small and scattered islands do not come within their purview. No atmosphere of expectancy surrounds the West Indies as it surrounds South-eastern Asia and tropical Africa. In the West Indies, more than in any other part of the Dependent Empire, the clues to the future seem to lie in the past. Only in one particular has the western fringe of the Dependent Empire acquired a new significance in the modern world. It has become part of the defensive bastion of the United States. For the defence of the western approaches to the American continent the Government of the United States has established service bases in several British dependencies in and around the Caribbean Sea. The care and maintenance of these dependencies has become, in a certain degree, an American interest. For Britain, on the other hand, the West Indies represent a long and vulnerable oceanic line, capable of carrying only a minor contribution to the sinews of war. In the recent war their superabundant population was drawn on as an auxiliary source of man-power more by the United States than by Britain. Heavy bounties were paid to them for unlifted and unconsumed products for which shipping and naval protection could not be provided. Once the waters of the Caribbean Sea witnessed epic naval combats in the days when Britain and France fought for colonial and maritime supremacy. Round the harbours of West Indian islands and sometimes under the fire of shore batteries, ships were disabled or sunk in the din and turmoil of battle. But recent naval history can only record the furtive passage of submarines lurking

amongst the islands and the disappearance of merchant vessels, almost silently, in a moonlit sea.

If colonies are the seeds of nations, it is not seed which has been scattered in the newest, and by far the largest, part of the Dependent Empire. This part lies within tropical and sub-tropical Africa. Most of it has only a short history. Its remoter past belongs more to the speculative builders of historical myths. If the historian looks further back than a hundred and fifty years, he finds himself enveloped in the mists of pre-history, groping for invisible landmarks in the company of the anthropologist. Tropical Africa has escaped colonisation, in the accepted sense of the term. Centuries ago its northern area was invaded and merged in the Islamic world of North Africa and the Near East. Islamic conquerors advanced across Africa from the north-east in companies of horsemen. Their advance was abruptly halted by the belt of rain-forest, and by the pests which infest it, before they could reach the shores of the Atlantic south-west of the Sahara. These conquerors have left the imprint of the desert-born civilisation of the followers of the Prophet in the region bordering on the Sahara. On the eastern coastal belt of tropical Africa, Moslem invaders from South-western Asia, of Arab race, established themselves as conquerors and colonisers. But they never penetrated the hinterland as settlers. Nature has helped to give tropical Africa immunity from colonisation. To the north of it lies the Sahara Desert, cutting it off from North Africa and the Mediterranean world. Far away to the south lies the Kalahari Desert, cutting it off from the area of white colonisation in the south of the continent. The statue of Cecil Rhodes scanning the northern horizon from Capetown represents him as apostrophising the people of his race in the words "Yonder lies your hinterland." White colonisation has been carried far inland from the south, but hardly into tropical Africa. Climate has forbidden sea-borne colonisation on any scale by

Europeans. Small communities of Europeans may succeed in making homes in the highlands of East Africa. But the status of the overwhelming majority of Europeans in tropical Africa will continue to be that of the temporary expatriate, of the exile in alien surroundings, never an authentic colonial but only a colonial *de carrière*.

Peoples of alien race may control the fortunes of British tropical Africa, but control will be enforced through other, and no less powerful, agencies than the presence of the controllers in any numerical strength in the midst of the peoples of Africa. In actual numbers Europeans may expect to be outnumbered by Asians on the eastern side of the continent. In East Africa Indians may even become a dominant minority, just as Europeans have become a dominant minority in South Africa ; but only if their increase in numbers is proportionate to that of the Africans and only then if they show political capacity of a high order and a greater readiness than hitherto to acquire a permanent stake in the country.

With other parts of the British Commonwealth tropical Africa has only tenuous contacts. With the senior territories of the Dependent Empire there was, of course, the former one-way traffic of the slave-trade. West Africa provided its steady quota of human cargoes for the West Indies for the best part of two hundred years. But the negro peoples of the West Indies have given nothing back to tropical Africa except a settlement of emancipated slaves, in Sierra Leone, nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. Otherwise the relationship between tropical Africa and the rest of the Dependent Empire owes nothing to a common physical ancestry.

Yet there is a historical parallel between the beginnings of the Dependent Empire in Africa and those of the first Colonial Empire in America, separated as they are by a span of centuries. In the latter part of the nineteenth century when tropical Africa began to attract European attention as something other than a collecting-ground

for the shipment of slaves, it is easy to discern influences reminiscent of the first movement of British expansion overseas, in spite of the physical differences in the character of the colonisation of America. The mid-Victorian era, like the Tudor era, was an age of discovery. Scientific curiosity ; religious zeal ; commercial enterprise ; nationalism, both acquisitive and defensive, following a period of internationalism ; free-lance overseas adventure with the government of the day "*sitting on the fence*"—those were salient features of both eras. Grant and Speke, Livingstone and Stanley, Baker and Burton, Rhodes and Lugard were unconscious imitators of Cabot and Frobisher, Willoughby and Hawkins, Drake and Raleigh. The ancient jibe about bush-whackers hawking bibles and gin to African savages gives a very imperfect idea of the many currents and cross-currents that were gathering momentum. In any event the pioneers of the Dependent Empire in Africa, equipped with the scientific paraphernalia of the nineteenth century, penetrated quickly and deeply into the darkness of Africa. They found almost equal variety in the features of physical geography and in the character of human institutions. The first Europeans to penetrate tropical Africa even discovered, as their successors still discover, tiny human groups unconscious of any larger unit of society than a single family. Here and there a large and well-organised political unit might interrupt the variations of social structure and practice characteristic of a world in which mankind only moved as far as their legs could carry them. The innovations of more than half a century have progressively enlarged African horizons. The enlargement has often been enormous. It has been consistently, and of necessity, uneven. But from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, from the Sahara to the Zambesi, one common denominator was obvious at the outset. Disorder, disease and poverty were there in plenty. The pestilence that walked in darkness and the sickness that destroyed in the

noon-day were even more calamitous and intractable scourges than any arrow or spear that might fly through the air by day or by night. Tropical Africa was no land of noble savages uncorrupted by the vices of more mellow civilisations. It was for the most part a land of debilitated, ill-nourished, and ignorant humanity, living precariously. It was a land where life was indeed apt to be "nasty, brutish and short." Until the nineteenth century, and until the end of the century in parts of tropical Africa, alien enterprise, both European and Asian, had been a great agency of destruction and depopulation. The mischief done to African society by the slave-trade is incalculable in its magnitude. But in recent times European enterprise has become an agency of repopulation. The suppression of the slave-trade and of the tribal warfare to which the trade was a perpetual incentive, and the introduction of the elements of scientific hygiene and of preventive and curative medicine have led to a great increase in population. The latest phase of European interference in tropical Africa is yielding "an increase of human stock," and authentically African stock, as abundant as any increase dreamed of by William Penn in his dreams of colonisation. "Beneficial for commerce . . ." Like the men of his time, Penn was thinking only of commercial advantages for the mother country. He took it for granted that the acquisition of a new and undeveloped estate was profitable. Tropical Africa resembles the colonial lands which once fascinated Penn in that, unlike the rest of the Dependent Empire, it still consists of a largely undeveloped estate. It has many "idle areas."<sup>1</sup> Whether this idle acreage can be turned to account in the impoverished world of the present day, and, if so, for the benefit of whom, is one of the crucial questions which confronts the British Commonwealth.

"Colonisation" is a loosely used term. When we claim for ourselves as a people the distinction of good

<sup>1</sup> The expression is used by Lord De La Warr. (*Times*, 16th June 1948).

colonists, we may be thinking not of the great overseas nations built up mainly on British stock, but of fellow-citizens of the United Kingdom who, in the pursuit of various careers, have been set down in some part of the Dependent Empire for longer or shorter periods of their working lives. A conservator of forests in Cyprus, a tobacco planter in Nyasaland, a chartered accountant in Singapore, or even a regular soldier posted for garrison service in Mauritius, are all thought of as participants in British "colonisation." But the word is a misnomer. The British flag flies in many dependencies which are no more than the outposts of a great maritime nation. The French used to say jocularly that it was a mistake to leave an island lying about (*il ne faut pas laisser traîner une île*) because the British would certainly occupy it. If part of the Dependent Empire was acquired by the British in a fit of absence of mind—a contention which has also been advanced, half in jest, half in earnest—other nations have helped by their absent-mindedness. Argentina, for example, has only now woken up to alertness concerning the Falkland Islands, as Guatemala has concerning British Honduras. In point of fact both the Falkland Islands and British Honduras have been colonised in a more genuine sense than many other of the smaller dependencies scattered along the oceanic highways. These dependencies are a conspicuous, but distinctive, feature of the colonial landscape. They are the taverns, the road-houses, the victualling depots, the coal dumps, the petrol pumps and the police stations; the necessary halting-places for the carriers of sea-borne trade. Shipping is the mainspring of their activity. The needs of dockyards and garrisons loom large in their domestic routine. But they provide no soil for the seeds of nations. These auxiliaries of the British Commonwealth are incapable of nationhood. Their inhabitants are classifiable by race and not by nationality, though they may live within a stone's throw of established national states like the Chinese of Hong-Kong.

Only east of Suez, and more than a thousand miles farther east, has the Dependent Empire been nurtured on genuine colonisation on any considerable scale. In Malaya there has been a great "increase of human stock" through the migration of aliens into lands which before the advent of the aliens were only lightly occupied. But the increase has been an increase of Asian stock. Under the conditions established by British rule in Malaya, Chinese, Indians and a motley crowd of aliens have found the country eminently "beneficial for commerce." Never so beneficial for so many as in a world undreamt of by William Penn, in which raw materials like rubber and tin from Malaya, very different from the "spices" of the East with which Penn was familiar, are shipped to the great continent on which he helped to sow the seeds of nations and so redress the unequal balance in the commerce of the old world with the new. Commerce has meant settlement in the lands of South-eastern Asia, as it always has with Asians. Whatever the size and character of his commitments, no Asian will have any but his own breed inside his business. An English commercial house in the East may employ Europeans and Asians in the ratio of one to fifty. But Asians have yet to learn the practice of combining with, and managing, others than their own kind both in business and politics. Moreover, an Asian immigrant who starts with a "one man" business is quickly surrounded by a family. Asian commerce thus becomes an agency of spurious colonisation; for all colonisation is spurious which does not attach colonists to the soil. Fortunately for Malaya its resources, more than those of any part of the Dependent Empire, are compatible with high standards of material well-being for all its peoples. No part of the Dependent Empire has made such rapid strides towards the recovery of prosperity in the post-war world. It has all the material ingredients of nationhood, but none of the less tangible, but no less indispensable, ingredients. It is intractably cosmopolitan,

with the cosmopolitanism of Asia, where peoples meet but do not mix, segregated from each other by seemingly impassible racial and cultural barriers. At the two geographical extremes of the Dependent Empire, in the main group of British islands in the western Pacific as in the West Indies, seed from India has been sown. In Fiji it was sown on soil in which the yield from native seed had dwindled. From the great Australasian lands of authentic British colonisation there has been no colonisation of the islands of the western Pacific, but the soil of the islands has been irrigated by Australasian enterprise and made "beneficial for commerce."

Within the British Commonwealth of Nations only the self-governing dominions have grown from genuine colonies into genuine nations. Nearly three hundred years have passed since William Penn was a familiar figure in palace and council chamber in the London of the Restoration. If to-day his shade could hover in the conference-rooms of Whitehall, he would find blue-prints bearing little resemblance to his own blue-prints as an empire builder. Of the first British Empire, to which he himself made so notable a contribution, little is left in British allegiance except the West Indian "plantations," as they were known in the vocabulary of his time. In these plantations the present condition of a society without slavery could not fail to gratify the man who, almost alone among his compatriots and contemporaries, raised a voice to protest against the slave-trade. And he might feel a pardonable self-satisfaction in his sagacity, no less than in his superior humanity, in observing how mischievous a heritage slavery has bequeathed to succeeding generations of men born to free estate. The impoverishment of many of the descendants of the slave-owning lords of the plantations he might dismiss with a trite truism from the Scriptures: The sins of the fathers are visited on the children. The maps hanging on the walls might well astound him with whole continental blocks in solid red and only a thin



red line beneath the name of so many small islands. "All peoples, nations and languages." So he might comment in the scriptural language congenial to him. And what a babel of tongues in so many plantations of such diverse origins ! Not only the tongues of the Orient and of Africa, but here and there in state chamber and court of justice, the language of the realm of France, or of the Italian states, or of the Greek domains of the Grand Turk mingling with his own mother tongue. And not only alien languages, but alien codes of law and "wondrous names of God" and prophets and saints alien to Christendom. But the man whose tolerance was such that in the colony to which his name was given in the first British Empire citizenship was thrown open to all who professed faith in Jesus Christ, whatever their manner of worship, would surely approve the impartial benevolence of His Majesty's officers of state in all plantations to Christian and Jew, Moslem and Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian, pagan and infidel. Perhaps, remembering old trouble of his own over the behaviour of his more enterprising fellow-colonists in the hunting-grounds of the redskins, he might wonder whether three hundred years had made it easier to reconcile the pursuit of rightful gain with justice to the native people in the many new plantations unfamiliar to him. He might regret his ghostly muteness ; his inability to contribute a few words of timely admonition. His uncompromising Quaker logic would lead him to disapprove the warlike equipment which would seem the only motive for the British allegiance of many "plantations." But he would surely find much food for quiet thought and for sage debate with the ancient dead on his return to the Elysian Fields.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

"DO NOT FORGET," an Indian delegate once declared at an Imperial conference, "it is only India that makes the British Empire truly Imperial." He went on to explain that while the self-governing dominions were mostly countries of a single people, and a people largely of British stock, India was a country of many different peoples. He might well have gone further, emphasising the contribution of the Dependent Empire to the imperial character of British territories overseas. For in racial variety and complexity the Dependent Empire surpasses even India. Amongst its inhabitants, distributed over more than fifty separate territories, whose numbers are now rising towards the vast figure of a hundred million, there are fewer than a hundred thousand of European stock, while the rest represent an almost bewildering variety of races. But apart from such obvious similarities between India and the Dependent Empire within the imperial family, there is a still closer association between the two. The Dependent Empire owes its origin and purpose to India in a striking degree. Many dependencies owe their British status to Britain's need to protect her eastern life-line. Without India, Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus in the Mediterranean ; St. Helena in the South Atlantic ; Ceylon, Mauritius and Seychelles in the Indian Ocean ; Aden and British Somaliland at the mouth of the Red Sea ; Malaya and Hong-Kong in the Far East, and maybe other British territories in Africa, might never have belonged to the association described in the ponderous vocabulary of official precision as "the non-self-governing dependencies."

India, in her turn, has left her imprint on the Dependent

*Empire.* Without British India, the Indian coolie and the Indian trader would not have deployed so as to create not only important minorities but even majorities of Indians in dependencies in which they were formerly unknown. Outside Asia, no less than within it, Indians are in the forefront of the dependent peoples.

Britain went to India to trade and stayed to rule. Before the beginning of the nineteenth century India had become one of Britain's outstanding national interests; the focal point of British activity in the eastern hemisphere. From India, Britain extended her interests and her authority into the Malay Peninsula and the China Sea. Whatever the vicissitudes of international relations, whether free trade or economic nationalism might prevail in the world at large, the security of the main oceanic routes, and notably the eastern route, became a permanent British interest. By the impetus which it gave to commercial enterprise the Industrial Revolution intensified this interest. To protect it the British Navy as a floating force was not enough. Landholdings were also needed, whether islands or strips of some continental seaboard, whence ships might operate and where they could take fuel and refit. The Dependent Empire became Britain's naval auxiliary. Mr. Winston Churchill not long ago gave characteristically trenchant expression to this aspect of colonial status which an excessive sensitiveness to the charge of imperialism prefers to disguise. Abandoning the grand manner to play the role of *enfant terrible* which he often finds congenial, Mr. Churchill intervened in a discussion in the House of Commons about constitutional reform in Malta to observe that the House might just as well discuss a constitution for a battleship. Nor inappropriately, a small island in the South Atlantic, which is now a dependency of St. Helena, was long known as H.M.S. *Ascension* and administered by the Admiralty.

The Dependent Empire, which before the penetration

of tropical Africa and Malaya consisted of small and scattered units, acquired its British allegiance as part of the "price of Admiralty" which moved the pen of Rudyard Kipling to grandiloquent verse in an age when Britain was more self-confident and less self-conscious. There is no need for any national apology. The system of maritime insurance in which the Dependent Empire largely originated has not been used to create or promote a British monopoly, even if Britain has, in the nature of things, been the principal beneficiary. Mr. Lewis Douglas, the present American Ambassador at the Court of St. James, was moved by a sense of historical accuracy as much as by diplomatic tact when he told a British audience that the free growth of the United States as a nation might have been greatly impeded if some other power than Britain had found herself established in what is British territory in and around the Caribbean Sea. To the west, in the remnants of her first empire in the new world, as well as to the east, Britain's main concern had become the freedom of the seas. For the nation of shop-keepers, as she was in the eyes of rivals less successful in their shop-keeping, a miscellany of maritime dependencies represented only a minor pecuniary interest in an era of rapid industrial expansion. After the abolition of slavery, national interest in their domestic affairs languished. Britain was indifferent to the spread of her own institutions under the British flag. She was conscious of no cultural mission. She felt no urge to undertake the tuition of dependent peoples in the arts of government as practised by herself. Provided that her authority was accepted and her financial commitments were kept light, she was content. A hundred years ago the national aims of Britain in the Dependent Empire might have been satisfied by an expedient such as that recently devised to satisfy the needs of the United States.

In the British dependencies across the Atlantic the United States have acquired, on long lease, areas for the

establishment of service bases to enable them to control the western approaches to the American continent. If communications and the technique of warfare had been the same a century ago and more as they are to-day, and if Britain had then been able to obtain the same security of tenure for extra-territorial bases for the fighting forces in Gibraltar, Malta, Ceylon and other parts of the Dependent Empire as the United States has secured in Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana and other British dependencies across the Atlantic, British needs would have been well accommodated. Instead of establishing dominion over palm and pine, Britain might well have perched on the branches in bird-like aloofness. She might have remained as indifferent to the political and economic affairs of St. Lucia or Mauritius, for example, as the United States are indifferent to the political and economic affairs of Jamaica. The potentialities of Ceylon as a profitable field of investment would no doubt have aroused her financial interest just as the potentialities of Trinidad and British Guiana with their mineral assets have attracted American attention. In addition to naval and military privileges she might have been tempted to claim preferential trading rights, just as the United States have claimed such rights in the Pacific Islands which were formerly under Japanese mandate. But land-holdings securing Britain's oceanic life-lines might have been acquired without any change in the status of numerous territories. Censorious critics of British Imperialism, no less than our own sentimental imperialists who look on the Dependent Empire as exemplifying the impulse to rule inherent in a race of *herrenvolk* both masterful and gentle, would do well to recollect that Britain of her own volition abandoned the Ionian Islands where her authority was firmly established when they ceased to be important for her maritime security. There was also a period in the last century when she came very near to abandoning her holdings on the coast of West Africa.

But circumstances prohibited any practical equivalent of the modern American expedient of service bases on alien territory. Circumstances equally prohibited the successful application of an intermediate system, short of the establishment of national sovereignty, such as "spheres of influence." A *pied-à-terre* for naval and military purposes involved nothing less than British allegiance for the peoples of those countries where the *pied-à-terre* was judged indispensable, and nothing less than British responsibility for their future destiny. A motley group of peoples, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, became indissolubly yoked to the British team taking their place at the side of others with earlier British associations. Britain is their arbiter ; responsible for care and maintenance, to put her responsibilities at the lowest level.

By the time that the chain of Britain's maritime dependencies had been forged and the East had been brought nearer to the West by the cutting of the Suez Canal, an east-bound traveller sailing from this country\* would have passed through many latitudes where the British flag denoted some unit of the dependent Empire. In the Mediterranean that flag was flying in Gibraltar, Malta and, finally, in Cyprus. Beyond the Suez Canal and the Red Sea it was flying at Aden and across the waters separating Asia from Africa in British Somaliland. Near the approaches to India it was flying in Ceylon. Still farther east it was flying in the Straits Settlements and in Hong-Kong. To the south it was flying in islands in the western Pacific. And on the older route to India round the Cape of Good Hope it was flying on lands overlooking the central Atlantic, in Gambia and Sierra Leone ; in the island of St. Helena on the western side of Africa, and in the islands of Mauritius and Seychelles on the eastern side. A separate chain of maritime dependencies lay in and around the Caribbean Sea. Its links were Bermuda, Bahamas, British Honduras, Jamaica, the Leeward and Windward Islands, Barbados, Trinidad and

British Guiana ; while far away in the south lay the solitary island dependency of the Falkland Islands. But a later phase, which has made the Dependent Empire a continental as well as a maritime Empire was already beginning. Within two or three decades the area and population of the Dependent Empire had been enormously increased, and its character had been greatly changed. Great blocks of tropical Africa had been added to it. A hundred years ago it was a thing of shreds and patches, most of its units not much larger than a county of average size in the United Kingdom and many of them smaller. Their total population was only a few millions. By the beginning of the present century great blocks of continental territory in Africa, as well as Malaya, had altogether changed the Dependent Empire in both dimensions and character. It had become a continental as well as a maritime Empire. In the earlier phase of growth of the Dependent Empire it is comparatively easy to pick up the clues and to follow the main thread of causation. In the origins of the maritime dependencies of Britain their purpose is clearly discernible. Motives and aims are not too complicated or too bewildering for a reasonable measure of understanding. But the spread of the Dependent Empire to tropical Africa is a phenomenon which cannot be segregated from a much vaster complex of related phenomena. It is part of a gigantic process which seems almost to operate with the apparently mechanical fatality of a cosmic force. This process is nothing less than the absorption for the first time, under influences which seem increasingly to elude human direction as they gather momentum, of new areas of continental dimensions, inhabited by millions of people, into the industrial civilisation of the West. Tropical Africa has been drawn into the economy of modern industrialism. Not that the inhabitants of tropical Africa had previously escaped the effects of European enterprise. West Africa had been penetrated by British and other European entrepreneurs

for the procurement of slave labour for the plantation colonies of America, just as East Africa had been penetrated by Arabs in search of slaves for conveyance to other destinations. But that was a crude variety of enterprise of which the causes and effects can be easily analysed. Forces more impersonal and more incalculable dominate the later phase in which the Dependent Empire attained full growth in tropical Africa and in Malaya ; for the cumulative weight of the forces released by the Industrial Revolution had begun to be felt. Science had mobilised powerful agencies ; science which, in the words of the first Lord Balfour, " is the great instrument of social chance ; all the greater because its object is not change but knowledge ; and its silent appropriation of this dominant function, amid the din of political and religious strife, is the most vital of all the revolutions which have marked the development of modern civilisation." It is for economists to explain why, during the nineteenth century, consumption and distribution failed to keep pace with expanding production carried out by European enterprise in areas previously more or less immune from it. In any event, the end of the nineteenth century witnessed a movement of territorial expansion which added to the Dependent Empire the Gold Coast and Nigeria with their frontiers as they are to-day, in West Africa. In East and Central Africa Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar and Nyasaland were added to the Dependent Empire, to be followed by Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika territory, through the vicissitudes of the present century. In the Far East, Malaya joined the Straits Settlements to form a substantial territorial unit of the Dependent Empire, though with a peculiar status of its own. In this outward urge to expansion in which Marxists detect the virus of imperialism inherent in the capitalist system, the repercussions of the new industrialism are obvious enough. Lord Lugard once declared that the British Empire in West Africa was made, not by British



financiers or by the British Government, but in spite of them. The judgment of so eminent an authority must command respect. And, whatever may be said of Malaya, tropical Africa taken as a whole has hitherto held only a secondary place in the calculations of investors. In the pioneer stage, in which Lord Lugard played so notable a part, very little of it represented even a fair business risk. Nevertheless, wherever usable export products were discovered, their exploitation was eagerly sought for the purpose of feeding European industry. The pressure on hesitant governments to establish British authority to protect British interests increased. Other than merely pecuniary interests brought pressure to bear. Missionaries eager to spread the gospel amongst the heathen of Africa and humanitarians anxious once for all to rid African society of the institution of slavery and its attendant evils appealed for national support. Again, in a period of growing international suspicion, when Britain's position of ascendancy amongst the great industrial powers was no longer undisputed and there were even evidences that her supremacy as a naval power might be challenged, prudence suggested that substantial land-holdings in tropical Africa might be a valuable adjunct to the scattered maritime dependencies. A combination of diverse and sometimes conflicting formative influences gives a different background to the dependencies of tropical Africa from that of the earlier maritime dependencies. It seems true to say that the Dependent Empire in tropical Africa is largely the creation of two of the main forces of nineteenth-century Britain ; the almost automatic urge of industrial expansion and the humanitarian tradition. These two forces have not found it easy to come to terms. The latent and often apparent antagonism between missionary and trader survives in two distinct attitudes to the treatment of the African dependencies. In one attitude the emphasis is on the social and moral welfare of the African. In the other the emphasis is on the material productivity

of Africa. In the long run the two attitudes must be brought into harmony, on grounds of expediency as well as on other grounds. But in the short run there may be sharp conflict. How sharp the conflict may be, and how radically the immediate exigencies of material productivity may prevail over the more generalised interests of the African, is demonstrated in the self-governing part of British Africa in the south of the continent. The hope of harmonisation is implicit in the well-known formula of a great personality in African history who has already been quoted. Lord Lugard described Britain as entrusted in tropical Africa with a dual mandate to rule in the interests of the natives of Africa and to develop the resources of Africa for the benefit of mankind.

The outstanding change brought about by the extension of the Dependent Empire to tropical Africa was, of course, that the dependent Empire now became predominantly an Empire of "backward" or "primitive" peoples. The relationship between Britain and tropical Africa was entirely different in character from that between Britain and the earlier maritime dependencies, or at least the great majority of them. Most of the maritime dependencies bore the imprint of eighteenth-century Europe, and some of them the imprint of eighteenth-century Britain. Nineteenth-century Britain was hardly remote from eighteenth-century Europe. A colonial governor and the principal British officers, whether civil or military, would have felt entirely at home in the society of a prominent sugar-planter in Jamaica or Barbados. Polite colonial society observed much the same ritual as polite society in Britain. Morals as well as manners conformed to much the same standards. Even in dependencies of non-British antecedents, such as Trinidad or Mauritius, not very different standards of behaviour would have separated the principal representatives of British authority from prominent members of local society, though the language of the latter would have been French and not

English and their religious practice Catholic and not Anglican. The two parties would at least have been as mutually congenial and comprehensible as the *habitués* of a drawing-room in Belgravia and those of a Parisian *salon*. For the masses, largely consisting in many dependencies of the descendants of a slave population, national status meant little. More than one maritime dependency at length secured in perpetuity for Britain had changed hands in the past through the vicissitudes of war. And resentment at an enforced change of national allegiance, whether a novelty or a repetition of previous experience, was at least tempered by the British disposition to make the new allegiance acceptable by respect for established institutions, and regard for linguistic or religious susceptibilities—a policy made happily easy by the absence of any great influx of people from Britain itself. Above all, no great change was involved in the tenor of life, either individually or collectively. Proprietary rights were little disturbed once slavery had been abolished. Industry and commerce were not greatly affected. A new flag certainly did not connote the arrival of the coercive forces of a new civilisation. In dependencies like Malta and Cyprus, the establishment of British authority (earlier in Malta and later in Cyprus) meant little more than the exchange of one variety of alien control for another, and a less repressive one. In Ceylon, of course, British authority was confronted with peoples already familiar with earlier intruders from the West. Singapore arose on ground reclaimed from swamp and jungle. Hong-Kong, when ceded compulsorily to Britain, was little more than a hiding-place for pirates.

In tropical Africa, on the other hand, Britain has inevitably been cast for the part of a great innovator. There the peoples of the Dependent Empire have been exposed to influences which have profoundly altered their material mode of life and their spiritual values. And if this is not true of all of them, and if European influences have

altogether by-passed some of them and have touched others only lightly, the confusion is only the worse confounded. For the rifts between African and African have been intensified. Neighbouring groups are not only out of step and out of sympathy, but within groups the friction between old concepts and new has set up a ferment. Sociologists observing the resulting reactions in a spirit of scientific detachment may feel satisfaction. Harassed administrators on the field of action may find the atmosphere uncomfortably tense. The fact remains that through European influence society in tropical Africa is undergoing transformation, however variable the tempo may be in different areas. In regions of bush and scrub, where man and beast are sparse and the kingdom of the insect has not yet been effectively disputed, the savage in his loin-cloth may be seen in surroundings to which the epithet "primitive" is still entirely apposite. Between him and his brother African, engaged as a newspaper editor, a lawyer or a doctor, there are countless gradations of Africans in some intermediate stage between the world of their forefathers and the brave new world of applied science and of economic man. Thirty years ago it was easy to deride the antics of a handful of urbanised Africans fascinated by such superficial trappings of a European outfit as sun-helmets, spats and spectacles. Such nondescripts were only a minor by-product of the impact of Europe on tropical Africa; an insignificant and unesteemed minority, as heartily despised by their fellow-Africans as they were uncongenial to the European exile who nevertheless found them useful, if literate, for handling the mounting volume of paper inseparable from the white man's commercial and official activities. But around villages where the European was an unfamiliar, or even an unknown figure, the corrosive influence of a new civilisation was at work. The soil was no longer tilled merely to raise crops for the subsistence of the community. Through the artful persuasions of discreet

intruders, tribal chiefs and village elders had discovered that there was profit in other kinds of produce which was carried far away to unknown destinations. And this produce no longer travelled only short distances in small bundles on human heads. As if to prove that it was needed, the white man called for men who would leave the land to build tracks for the great wagons hauled by the engines which he had invented. Payment for the needed produce was quick and easy. Besides the white man, other sorts of aliens appeared on the scene with ready money to offer for the fruits of the soil and all sorts of attractive wares to sell. Dealers in produce and vendors of trade goods came to stimulate a new kind of agriculture and to create and cater for new tastes and appetites. The Asiatic camp-followers of the scattered cohort of the *Pax Britannica*—the Syrian and the Indian—began to filter into tropical Africa. African isolation was over. The old life of tribe and village was reorientated by schemes propounded in committee-rooms in great cities thousands of miles away. The Uganda peasant saw his cotton no farther than the local market where it passed into the hands of the Indian ginner or dealer. Gold Coast and Nigerian peasants saw their cocoa-beans or their ground-nuts collected by the first of a long series of middlemen. But proceedings in the offices of cotton-brokers in Bombay and in the committee-rooms of great industrial combines like Cadbury and Unilever had begun to give a new direction to African society.

In earlier days, whatever their sentiments towards certain individual traders or trading corporations, missionaries and humanitarians had hoped that legitimate trade might become one of the agencies through which slavery would be eliminated in tropical Africa. In many ways the absorption of new areas of the African continent into a wider, or rather a world-wide, economy of a new kind accelerated the disappearance of slavery. But a prolonged specialisation in the single commodity of

slaves had left tropical Africa with little else to sell. All kinds of preparatory processes were needed for its exploitation in the sense in which the term is used by the French for its *mise-en-valeur* or, in other words, for its manipulation for productive ends. The days of straightforward barter of unprocessed goods ready-to-market were over now that slaves were no longer exchanged for liquor and firearms. There were few, if any, wares which civilised and backward people could exchange in casual and fugitive contacts like those imagined in the ancient world by the scholar-poet of the Victorian era.<sup>1</sup>

“As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,

. . . unbent sails

There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,

Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come ;

And on the beach undid his corded bales.”

It would be as interesting, as it is impossible, to know whether the Tyrian traders of antiquity, who were as familiar with the waters of the Zambesi as they were with the anchorages of the Cornish coast in the days of pre-Roman Britain, transformed the life of Central Africa in their pursuit of legitimate commerce. In the modern world, at any rate, when Europe and Africa meet, the former seems fated to behave as innovator and the latter as imitator. Even North Africa with its Islamic traditions yields to the blandishments or the coercions of its artful and persistent neighbours from across the Mediterranean. “*Mon pays fait partie de la vieille Europe !*”<sup>2</sup> Such was the delighted comment of a khedive when, having opened the doors to a horde of European speculators and their agents, he beheld their handiwork in the garish architecture with which nineteenth-century Egypt was adorned. Tropical Africa has been even more pliant, as behoved backward peoples in face of the magicians of technological progress. It has been said that different peoples can live together but that different civilisations cannot do so.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold. *The Scholar Gypsy*.

<sup>2</sup> “My country is part of old Europe.”

Such generalisations may be no more than half-truths. But while it is unlikely, to say the least of it, that tropical Africa is capable either of a revulsion against European influences and practices, it is equally unlikely that in tropical Africa European influences will be easily canalised in the future so as to suit European taste and convenience. Human society is not a laboratory in which experiments can be readily controlled.

Thirty years ago British exiles in tropical Africa liked to think that tropical Africa could be brought within the orbit of European activity without any radical transformation of African life. "It is no business of ours to turn Africans into bad imitations of Europeans." So the saying went. The sentiment found frequent expression in offices and clubs frequented by the exile community. It was reflected in a distaste for the sound of the English language on African lips. Rather than acquiesce in the sense of identity implicit in the use of his language by an African, the most slothful British exile (and linguistically we are a most slothful but by no means incompetent people) would make a point of acquiring a modicum of the vocabulary and the idiom of an African language. Almost instinctively, and quite apart from all questions of racial *amour-propre*, the British exile would feel a certain hostility towards the evangelising and educational activities of the missionary. On African soil Christianity was as suspect as a religion for the black man as English was suspect as a language. The British ideal was the ideal of a good African, pagan or Mahomedan, weaned from savage and cruel practices, humane to his fellow creatures and to animals, but otherwise staunch in his attachment to African traditions and institutions. Anthropologists, mobilised for the purpose of identifying and preserving authentic strands in the fabric of African society, have invested various social and political institutions with scientific credentials. But anthropological research, whatever its value, can provide no mechanism for the insulation

of the authentic institutions of tropical Africa. Economic exigencies have carried European penetration too far. In the British dependencies of tropical Africa it is no longer possible to segregate the different elements of European civilisation and to release or to withhold their influence at will.

Yet such precisely was the avowed aim of certain missionary societies at an earlier date in parts of South Africa. The missionary himself was to hold the filter through which the pure juices of the Christian gospel were to be passed for African consumption, all other impurities being kept back. In practice this meant that of all aliens only Christian missionaries should be allowed access to African society. This peculiar form of escapism has its modern counterparts. At the end of the first world war official authority was moved to seek the views of a certain Anglican Bishop<sup>1</sup> of long experience of tropical Africa as to the best means of disposing of the area now known as Tanganyika Territory, of which Germany had been deprived through the fortunes of war. The Bishop<sup>2</sup> recommended the conversion of the area, or of at least a part of it, into a sanctuary for Africans from which aliens of every kind should be excluded with the exception of an *élite* of very carefully selected custodians. So cheerless was the episcopal view of the effect on the African of the characteristic activities of the European. Less cheerless was the view of another Bishop<sup>2</sup> of the same communion who, a very short time later, wrote with an almost lyrical enthusiasm of the benign effects of the cotton industry in Uganda. "I have myself motored mile after mile through growing cotton in Uganda to see the jungle transformed, to see the desert (literally) blossoming as the rose, for the pink and primrose flower on the cotton-shrub gives strangely the effect of a rose-garden. . . . From the imperial point of view the outlook is stimulating.

<sup>1</sup> The late Right Rev. Dr. Frank Weston, formerly Bishop of Zanzibar.

<sup>2</sup> Right Rev. Dr. Gresford Jones, formerly Assistant Bishop of Uganda. See *United Empire* (Journal of the Royal Empire Society) 1924 series : quoted by L. C. A. Knowles, *The Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire*—Vol. I, Book 1.



From the native point of view, I must confess, it is even more so. . . . It is a new world of self-respect, of hope, of co-operation with the forces of progress. The chief swings past on his bicycle, or even in his car ; his cotton rupees pay for his son's schooling at a good school ; even the peasant, protected and encouraged, has his share in the new agriculture." It is indeed a new world of co-operation with the forces of progress, and in this new world scientific agriculture is a powerful agency. There is no exact calculus, episcopal or lay, British or African, of the merits of the new world of tropical Africa. Less than thirty years ago a gruesome ceremony was performed in a remote corner of a small island off the coast of East Africa. The principal officiants were the village midwife and the village witch-doctor. Under their ministrations, and amid curious incantations, a new-born child was wrested from its mother and buried after its mouth and ears had been stopped with earth and its eyes sewn up with coarse thread. It is reasonable to assume that the child was dead before it was put under the ground, although the intention was that it should be buried alive. The object of the rite was openly proclaimed. It was to make certain Europeans reported to have arrived in the island speechless and deaf and blind towards the village so that the people of the village might continue to observe the customs of their fathers undisturbed by strangers. The magic prophylaxis was doomed to failure, though the witch-doctor or his successor may still command a dwindling credit as a herbalist or dispenser of aphrodisiacs.

Thus African society has been pressed into an alien framework like countless other societies in the history of mankind. In the process there is a close parallel to the British penetration of India. Like the peoples of India, the peoples of tropical Africa have been left in possession of their heritage in the soil, or, in economic jargon, of the basic means of production, however imperious the influences to which they have had to submit in the

employment of those means. This judgment at least applies, with comparatively little qualification to British tropical Africa. It is a common abuse of language to speak of dependent territories as belonging to Britain. Ownership is a word with altogether misleading associations. National sovereignty no more connotes proprietary rights to African territory than it connotes, in this country, the public ownership of the estates of the Duke of Westminster or the orchard at the back of Mr. Smith's garden. The appropriation by force or by fraud of land overseas for the benefit of corporations or individuals from the United Kingdom is no feature of the British yoke. In the earlier colonisation of the older parts of the Dependent Empire, West Indian aborigines may have been driven away from their tillage or their hunting-grounds to make room for the first white intruders into the New World. Such displacements of population, as they might be called in modern idiom, are common to all periods of history; to the national growth of the United States or of the Dominion of New Zealand, for example, no less than to the final advance of the ancient Israelites into the Promised Land many centuries before Christ. British West Africa, on the other hand, has within the last fifty years and under British auspices become an important region of production for world markets without the acquisition of land by Europeans, whether individuals or companies, throughout an area of nearly half a million square miles. In East and Central Africa the story is rather different. Two parallel developments have taken place. In Kenya the production of export crops is very largely in the hands of white settlers, to whom large tracts of land, mostly unused by Africans, have been alienated. The cotton industry of Uganda, on the other hand, is the exclusive achievement of native cultivation on land exclusively in native hands. In Tanganyika white settlers have acquired land; and still more so, in proportion to the size of the country, in Nyasaland where both European and African are engaged in the cultivation of tobacco.

These distinctive developments, which originated half a century ago, were not the outcome of any deliberate policy. They were part and parcel of the accepted curriculum of free enterprise and free negotiation. They came about in haphazard fashion in a world in which belief in *laissez-faire* was still strong. In at least one instance the same series of events set both developments, in spite of their contradictory appearance, in motion. The history of the Kenya-Uganda Railway is a striking example of the random course which European intervention in tropical Africa might take. Strategic motives have had little to do with railway construction in the dependent Empire; but the Kenya-Uganda Railway was first built to serve a general imperial interest in Egypt by fortifying British influence and authority in the area surrounding the sources of the Nile. The other main influence in support of the construction of the railway was humanitarian. The railway was advocated as an instrument for the final suppression of the East African slave-trade, for long the principal industry of the Arabs whose former rule over the East African seaboard was now passing to new masters. Yet within a short time a railway which owed its construction largely to strategic and humanitarian motives—a combination sufficiently curious in itself—had, by providing an artery of transport between the East African coast and hinterland, led to the establishment of a thriving new native industry in Uganda and through it to the prolongation, with British support, of something closely resembling a feudal system in which the feudal lords were African Christians. Subsequent results equally unforeseen and even more momentous, were the creation of a white society in juxtaposition with black society in the heart of tropical Africa through the opening up of the delectable highlands of Kenya. The problems to which such a juxtaposition had given rise in the United States or in South Africa were no deterrent to their reproduction in the Dependent Empire. And, to

sow yet further seeds of racial variegation, the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway contributed in no small measure to Indian penetration into East Africa. Native Africa could offer to the railway undertakers no labour, either skilled or unskilled. They were therefore driven to the expedient of recruiting Indian labour. The Indian coolie and the Indian artisan were quickly followed by the Indian trader. In East Africa, as in South Africa, a triangular racial theorem now awaits solution. Small wonder that the late Lord Passfield, better known under his former name of Sidney Webb, when holding office as Secretary of State for the Colonies some twenty years ago, is reported to have said that he could never settle down to sleep at the end of the day's work without disquieting thoughts about Kenya.

The effects of European enterprise on the economy of tropical Africa are reflected first and foremost in the new direction given to agricultural production. But in some areas important sources of mineral wealth have been opened up. So far South Africa has altogether outstripped the rest of the African continent south of the Sahara in the advance of industrialisation through the exploitation of mineral resources. In the Dependent Empire in Africa only the copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia, which has become one of the most important sources of the world's copper supply, is in the front rank in the production of minerals. But in both East and West Africa mineral resources of various kinds, capable of economic exploitation, have been discovered. Further survey work may well lead to the extension of mining industries. Such industries have a special importance in two ways. Not only do they represent a more solid asset than agricultural raw materials or even food-stuffs, but more than any agricultural activity they accelerate the assimilation of Africa to Europe in one direction in which progress has hitherto been comparatively slow. Mining is a powerful agency in the creation of an urbanised

industrial society. It involves not only the substantial recruitment of labour but the assembly of a concentrated labour force. Agricultural development in tropical Africa had done comparatively little to create a wage-earning class or to throw wage-earners together in the mass. The growth of communications and the handling of goods have transformed more Africans into wage-earners than primary production has done. The railways, the docks, the commercial and government offices, rather than the countryside, are familiar with the routine of the pay-roll inscribed with African names and smudged in the receipt-column with the crosses or thumb-marks of many illiterate recipients of the weekly packet. African society has already begun to divide on lines familiar to Europe. Occupational distinctions are acquiring significance. Capital and labour are more clearly differentiated. The alignments of industrial society have become discernible. So far only in one part of the Dependent Empire have Europeans sought entry into the ranks of labour, in the sense in which the term is generally understood. In Northern Rhodesia certain forms of skilled labour in the mining industry are monopolised by Europeans, to the exclusion of Africans from the higher prizes open to labour. For labour is not proof against the vices of racial discrimination which it detects and denounces with alacrity in capitalism. Outside the copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia, managerial work, or at the lowest, clerical or equivalent work, is the function of the white man in the Dependent Empire. Europeans do not mingle with Africans or Asians in the ranks of labour.

In spite of the overwhelming superiority of the forces to which tropical Africa has yielded, there is something remarkable in the readiness of Africa's surrender. History records bloodless revolutions and bloodless conquests as well as bloody ones. But seldom has so vast a conquest been achieved at the cost of less blood than the conquest of tropical Africa by European enterprise. Frontier wars

and punitive expeditions were almost as rare as rebellions or risings in areas already settled. Here and there some African potentate preferred to show fight rather than submit to the will of the intruders. There were Arab Sultans of Zanzibar whose defiance called into play the guns of the British Navy, but this was not the resistance of Africa but of the Arab overlords of the East African seaboard, themselves intruders of alien race. Savage Africa threw up an occasional hero of resistance, like Kabarega of Uganda or Prempeh of Ashanti. A few such representatives of a fitful resistance found their way to the island dependency of Seychelles in the Indian Ocean therein to spend their declining years in exile. It is significant of the ready capitulation of the African forces of resistance that in the diocese to which Seychelles belongs the Rev. John Prempeh, kinsman of the exiled King of Ashanti in the next generation, now adorns the ranks of the Anglican clergy. In one of his public utterances, when Secretary of State for the Colonies in a by-gone administration, Mr. Winston Churchill was moved to contrast the easier rewards to imperial enterprise offered by the unresisting peoples of tropical Africa with the arduous and thankless task of coming to terms with the truculent warriors and stubborn theologians of militant Islam in the desolate lands where Asia and Africa meet.

Farther east the followers of the Prophet have been more easy to placate. More spectacular than any development in tropical Africa were the repercussions of European activity under British auspices farther east. Malaya is the outstanding example in the Dependent Empire of the transformation of a "backward" country through the radiation of the forces released by the industrialisation of Europe. Here the enterprise of western Europe has united with that of eastern Asia. China and India have contributed their quota of capital, labour and organising ability. Within less than a century Malaya has not only been transformed from a land of swamp and jungle into

a leading country in the production of tin and rubber, two of the most important raw materials in many basic industries ; but the transformation has been accompanied by a remarkable process of repopulation. On the indigenous population a new population of alien origin, no longer numerically inferior, has been superimposed. The recent history of Malaya has sometimes been compared with the latest phase in the history of Palestine. Europeans, Chinese and Indians in combination have created immense new sources of wealth in Malaya as Jews have created them in Palestine. In Malaya, as in Palestine, the terrain on which they have worked is one that had long been occupied by a static Islamic society. But Malayan reaction has been very different from those of Palestinian Arabs. In Malaya nature provided a cushion to soften the impact of intrusion. Alien intruders came, not to dislodge an indigenous people from the land which they prized, nor even to threaten any serious encroachment. No active co-operation was demanded of the rulers and people of Malaya. No measures of coercion were applied. The land turned to productive uses was virtually a no-man's-land. The work was a gigantic work of reclamation, set in motion by the almost fortuitous discovery of treasure awaiting extraction. The titular rulers of an undeveloped estate were accommodately acquiescent. Malaya provides a fascinating example of peaceful penetration painlessly pressed home with the lubricant of a benevolent blackmail. The preservation of the existing order of society in native Malaya and of the status and privileges of the Oriental potentates who presided over it was guaranteed by a series of treaties. And in due course the indigenous population, with little or no exertion on its part, was provided with the material lay-out and equipment of a flourishing modern state and invited to participate in all the benefits made available by handsome public revenues. The prosperity created by alien enterprise was able to pay handsome tribute. And the rulers of

Malaya, no longer driven to war and piracy as the fiscal expedients appropriate to princely status, came to appreciate the blessings of tranquil and effortless opulence. The former no-man's-land of swamp and jungle has been absorbed into the well-mapped territory which, in spite of the ravages of recent war, is the El Dorado of Britain's Dependent Empire. But Malaya is now something of a no-man's-land in a different sense. Its people, for long the supine spectators and pampered beneficiaries of a new industrial order which they were as disqualified to resist as they were to defend it against Japanese assault in co-operation with its British custodians, have yet to settle their future relations with the Asian aliens who have settled in their midst and who, having done so much to "make" their country, are now beginning to outnumber them and to claim a status commensurate with their own material achievement.

It is Malaya and tropical Africa, the latest and by far the most extensive of the Dependent Empire's acquisitions, which give it its importance in the contemporary world. The older maritime dependencies have a more fluctuating value. For their value rests for the most part, not on endowment or the promise of future endowment, but on geographical position. Now, more than ever, geography is in flux. To borrow an illuminating expression from popular language, a country which, thanks to its position alone, is to-day "on the map" may well have gone "off the map" ten years hence. Just as a new arterial road or by-pass may put a petrol-filling station out of business, so may a new development in the application of science to transport, or even a new political alignment deprive one or other of the maritime dependencies of its importance in the British scheme of things. With the maritime dependencies which have been uninterruptedly British for centuries and which owe their origin to earlier migration overseas from this country, there are certain ties of blood and race. But in most of the maritime



dependencies these ties are lacking, and it is a melancholy reflection that in many of them not only is their British status due to the permanence in the world of the threat of war, but that their peak periods of prosperity have been during the periods of two world wars when every source of national supply had to be stimulated and drawn on to the utmost.

But if, by some miracle, the latter part of the present century came to witness a prolonged period of international peace and if confidence in its durability were such that considerations of strategy and maritime security ceased to preoccupy the nations, the importance of the Dependent Empire in Malaya and tropical Africa would be unimpaired, the former for its proved achievement, the latter for the promise of future performance in the peace-time economy of the world. In Malaya and tropical Africa the extension of the Dependent Empire by which tropical peoples were integrated in the industrial economy of Europe represents a major process in the history of human affairs. In the process the colonial powers, with Britain in the forefront, were the active experimenters and the tropical peoples the passive reagents. But the reactions of the latter have now become more lively. As the price of co-operation in the new order they demand a greater share in its material benefits and a less subordinate status. The legitimacy of the demand has been accepted in principle by the colonial powers and its acceptance has been proclaimed to the world at large. A new era of colonial nationalism has opened and colonial powers are already at grips with this new force, whatever the difference in their methods and attitudes in dealing with their dependencies. Their responsibility is immense ; for the major colonial powers, Britain, France and the Netherlands are concerned with dependent populations amounting in each case to nearly one hundred millions of people and covering in all some seven millions of square miles of the earth's surface.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ECONOMIC PATTERN

AN authority <sup>1</sup> on the economic history of Britain records in a picturesque review of the beginnings of English expansion overseas how a company was floated for a venture (as capitalist enterprise was called in those risky days) with shareholders consisting of fifteen peers and thirty peeresses, eighty-two knights, eighteen widows and spinsters, twenty-six clergy and physicians, besides merchants and tradesmen. It would be pleasant to assume that solicitude for the economic betterment of the heathen in distant climes entered into the calculations of those by-gone investors. Such an assumption would be by no means unreasonable. But it can be taken for granted that the primary object of the enterprise was the enrichment of the seventeenth-century equivalents of the occupants of Leadenhall Street, Harley Street and Dean's Yard ; and that the pecuniary return, if any, on the enterprise was applied to such uses at home and abroad as might have appealed to the investors. Englishmen of that age, in common with those of later ages, had a lively sense of the right to do as they wished with their own. So has the modern investor in enterprise concerned with the Dependent Empire.

In a world populated by all sorts and conditions of human beings living under all sorts and conditions of physical environment, economic development is of necessity uneven. It is also unpredictable. Technological change may steer enterprise into entirely new channels. Some part of the globe that has been ignored or neglected for centuries may become a great centre of industry. Just

<sup>1</sup> C. M. Waters. *A Short Economic History of England*. Vol. I Part IV.

as the remains of great cities lie buried in the sand, so may some of the backwoods of the world some day yield to the advancing bulldozers of industrial civilisation. Change may be fast or slow ; but whether it is fast or slow the forces of capital are continually active in their search for fresh sources of wealth. The capitalisation of the Dependent Empire exemplifies this tendency. Just as it was discovered in a geographical sense by European explorers, so it was discovered in an economic sense by European investors. Like Cæsar, these investors, or rather their agents, came, saw and, in an economic sense, conquered. It is just conceivable that at some future date what is now the Dependent Empire, or at least parts of it, will have so developed that the rôles will be reversed. Europe may come to depend on what are now its dependencies for the bulk of its material equipment. But at the present stage of human history, Britain's Dependent Empire stands out as the creation of extraneous capital not only in the sense that its economy has been determined by that agency, but in the sense that its future economy depends on the same agency. In other words, the future development of the Dependent Empire, or at least of the greater part of it, depends on the degree in which extraneous capital can be attracted to it in quest of profitable employment.

Hitherto, investment of British capital from the United Kingdom in the Dependent Empire is estimated by official statisticians to represent less than ten per cent. of the total of British overseas investments in the period up to the war. There was more British capital laid out in Europe or in Argentina (to take a single foreign country) than in all the Dependent Empire put together. The Dependent Empire is not by any means exclusively capitalised from United Kingdom sources. Both Canada and the United States have substantial investments in the British West Indies. American and European capital, as well as British, is extensively invested in Malaya.

American and European capital co-operates with British in many undertakings in British tropical Africa. The industries of Fiji and of the dependencies of the western Pacific are largely built up on capital from Australia and New Zealand. And throughout the Dependent Empire, Indians and Chinese have invested in many varieties of industrial and commercial enterprise. Yet in spite of this outlay of capital there are few parts of the Dependent Empire in which public revenue—a good index of national income—for a year exceeds the expenditure of this country for a single day during the peak period of the war, while in most dependencies the public exchequer takes in less in twelve months than was spent in this country in the space of twenty-four hours on casual work of road clearance during the rigours of the winter 1946-47. In short, the national income of none of the dependencies, with the possible exception of Malaya, has yet reached the level at which mere literacy is put within reach of all, let alone the benefits of penicillin and M. and B.

Benefits of the kind just described are enjoyed in this country as a matter of course, primarily because of the sources of wealth lying beneath the soil on which we live. It took centuries to discover the means by which these sources could be tapped. By the same means equivalent sources can be tapped wherever they exist. But it has yet to be shown that they exist in the tropical and semi-tropical regions in which the greater part of the Dependent Empire lies. In the meantime it seems, on the face of it, that most of the dependent peoples must be content with a lower standard of life than ours. Nature sets her limits to productive enterprise. Beyond these limits investment falls off. Economic development progresses so far, and no further. A statement presented to Parliament in 1940 includes the following passage: "Few of the colonies (*i.e.* the territories of the Dependent Empire) have the good fortune to possess substantial mineral wealth and in

comparatively few are there manufacturing industries of any magnitude. The majority are wholly, or almost wholly, dependent on the more limited resources derived from agriculture." The Dependent Empire may enjoy the distinction of having its soil watered by some of the world's largest rivers. It may be the proud possessor of one or two of the world's highest mountains. In Hong-Kong and Singapore it may claim two of the world's principal seaports. But as a home of great and populous inland cities it is altogether undistinguished. It has no Ahmedabad, no Montreal, no Johannesburg. Parts of it are thickly populated ; too thickly in fact for their natural resources, like the island of Barbados, for example, or the Ibo country in Nigeria. But in the main humanity is thin on the ground, less than thirty to the square mile on an average.

The Dependent Empire, though not the Dependent Empire alone, has belied the confident assumptions of our Victorian forefathers. It has mocked their faith in the continuous and triumphant expansion of capitalist enterprise *proprio motu* and of the progressive growth of prosperity and population all the world over. Even Marxist catechists may begin to doubt the dogma of the irresistible urge to outward expansion of capitalist imperialism. Yet capitalist imperialism, in some form, is the only agency by which the Dependent Empire can hope to reach the stage of economic puberty at which its own capital resources will make capitalist imperialism superfluous. Whatever latent resources may await exploitation, they cannot be exploited without the material equipment (to say nothing of the technical skill) which only extraneous capital can provide. Apart from rudimentary subsistence cultivation, every form of productive enterprise in the Dependent Empire testifies to the indispensable character of extraneous capital. In almost every part of the Dependent Empire extraneous corporations or their local subsidiaries own and operate plant, machinery, transport

equipment and every solid or sizeable building. Commerce, whether concerned with the purchase and export of local produce or the importation of capital or consumer goods, is financed by extraneous capital. Extraneous capital provides the credit facilities on which local production depends. For purposes of illustration almost any dependency can be selected at random ; for nearly all tell the same tale. General ignorance of the Dependent Empire is often proclaimed and deplored. This ignorance sometimes reaches high quarters. Many speeches, both public and private, have been enlivened by the story of the cabinet minister who, when asked to indicate the whereabouts of the British Virgin Islands, could only surmise that such islands must be a long way from the Isle of Man. But thanks to the talent of a celebrated comedian and the resources of the B.B.C. the imaginary Crown Colony of Tomtopia is still fresh in the memory of a large public. Governor Handley with his conspicuously ungubernatorial manner, the bibulous Colonel Chinstrap, Major Mundy living mentally in the Victorian era, Chiefs Wambababooja and Bigga-Banga, the former exemplifying the refinements of western culture, the latter the savagery of the tropical bush—these fictitious personalities may seem eccentric rather than representative. But it is easy to put them down in representative surroundings. For present purposes Tomtopia need not be placed on the map. It can be situated equally well in the southern Pacific, the Indian Ocean, or the Caribbean Sea. Its economic geography need not be described in detail. The general panorama can include or exclude according to individual taste the corybantic activities of a dark-skinned humanity addicted to strip-tease dancing, the bush telegraph and other picturesque and largely mythical characteristics of " native " life. In Tomtopia the centre of economic gravity is Front Street in Port Handley—for so let the capital and seaport town of Tomtopia be named.

Front Street, as its name suggests, runs along the quayside. It is flanked with buildings only on the landward side. The principal buildings consist of a block of government offices, the premises of the Tomtopia branch of Barclays Bank (Dominion and Overseas), the warehouses of the Tomtopia Lighterage and Transport Company, the repair shops and motor-vehicle depot of the same company, and the spacious office of the old-established firm of Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy, in the management of which neither Colonel Chinstrap nor Major Mundy participate. From end to end of Front Street extraneous enterprise reigns supreme. In the harbour below Front Street it is no less supreme. A steamer, flying the red ensign, lies at anchor away from the quayside. In the tropical sunlight it is easy to read the large lettering on the stern of the vessel, which proclaims her home port to be London and her ownership to be that of a well-known shipping company registered in the United Kingdom. On the starboard side of the vessel lies a lighter belonging to the Tomtopia Lighterage and Transport Company. From this lighter sacks of coconuts, the staple product of Tomtopia, are being loaded. On the port side of the vessel lies another lighter into which cargo is being discharged. The cargo consists of wooden cases containing a miscellany of trade goods consigned to Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy who hold agencies on behalf of several firms of manufacturers in the United Kingdom. A packing-case of much larger dimensions, lowered cautiously to the accompaniment of strident clamour from the Tomtopian lighter crew, contains a new motor car for Chief Wambabooja. It is also consigned to Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy, who are agents for two celebrated firms of motor manufacturers in the United Kingdom. In the harbour a few native canoes rock in the backwash as the trim motor launch of Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy speeds towards the steamer lying at anchor. Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy are also the agents of the shipping company to

which the steamer belongs. The Tomtopia Lighterage and Transport Company, it may be guessed, is no more than a department of Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy, which firm now holds all the company's shares. It is an important undertaking because in addition to running a service of lighters for the loading and unloading of ships in the harbour, it also runs an inland service of lorries. These lorries carry the coconuts from the plantations of the Tomtopians to the warehouses of the company in Front Street. They also carry from Port Handley to Indian shop-keepers in up-country villages the gawdy cotton goods which delight the wives and daughters of Chief Bigga-Banga. Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy are very much a power in the land. They are in undisputed control of the commerce of Tomtopia. Chief Bigga-Banga accepts this situation with savage incomprehension and indifference. But Chief Wambababooja, who got an honours degree in Economics at Cambridge University, is ready to explain how in a primitive country like Tomtopia free commercial competition usually ends in the elimination of competition. Wambababooja bears no ill-will towards Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy and the system which they represent. To extraneous enterprise he owes the introduction of the Tomtopian coconut into the world market and the consequent increase in the revenues which he enjoys by hereditary right as Paramount Chief of more than half of Tomtopia. Hence his old Harrovian tie, his honours degree, the exquisite intonation of his English, and many other advantages and amenities. Wambababooja is even unmoved by the spectacle of Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy in enjoyment of an apparent monopoly of Tomtopia's external trade. He fears no serious drop in the prices offered by so concentrated a buying organisation as Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy for the coconuts grown on his domains. He knows that while the same set of interests monopolises both export and import business, the import side of the business will



not be allowed to languish by cramping Tomtopian purchasing power through the payment of too niggardly prices for Tomtopian coconuts. Messrs. Chinstrap & Mundy, so Wambababooja correctly surmises, make something each way and both they and their principals in London are satisfied.

Architecturally, Port Handley consists of two towns. Tucked away behind Front Street there is the "native" town, in which there are mud and plaster huts with a thatching of dried palm leaves. Front Street, on the other hand, is a projection of Europe. Its buildings, from their foundations deep in the soil to their roofs of corrugated iron sheeting are made of materials imported from the world of European industry. Every fixture, every item of equipment in each room, the ash-trays on the office desk of the senior partner of Messrs. Chinstrap & Munday no less than the massive safe in the corner of the room, comes from overseas. In the office of the manager of Barclays Bank (Dominion and Overseas) there is a solitary exception ; a waste-paper basket of Tomtopian material and workmanship which owes its existence to the enthusiasm of the manager of a mission school with a passion for native arts and crafts. . . .

Tomtopia, in short, is the creation of extraneous capital. By extraneous capital Tomtopia is equipped for production, enabled to market its products, and provided with goods which absorb its purchasing power. The capital is, of course, supplied by persons of whom ninety-nine out of a hundred have never set foot in Tomtopia and have no intention of so doing. In this respect the situation in Tomtopia resembles that of the Dependent Empire generally. It is a situation which colonial nationalists find particularly exasperating. A few years ago an eminent permanent official of the Colonial Office on tour in the Dependent Empire was incensed to find that a representative group of citizens in a certain colonial community looked on proposals for the capitalisation of

development in the Dependent Empire at the expense of the British taxpayer not so much as a measure of imperial generosity as an act of bare restitution. "What you (*i.e.* the British taxpayer collectively) propose to give us now," so the argument went, "is nothing to what you (*i.e.* individual investors in the aggregate) have been taking out of us for years." It is quite impossible to calculate even approximately the return in interest on the British capital from this country invested at different times in the Dependent Empire, just as it is impossible to guess how much capital has been sunk and lost without any return. Extraneous capital has always been one of the bugbears of nationalism, and not only of nationalism of the colonial variety. While French communists inveigh against the subordination of France to the forces of American capital, in French Tunisia the nationalist press directs its attack on French undertakings on the ground that the natural resources of the country are being exploited in the interests of French capital. Indonesian nationalists object to Dutch enterprise designed primarily to sustain the national income of the Netherlands. The attitude of colonial nationalists in the Dependent Empire was picturesquely expressed when a colonial medical student was recently heard to declare, not in the studio in front of the microphone for the world to hear, but over the tea-cups in the canteen of Broadcasting House, that the capitalisation of the Dependent Empire resembled a blood transfusion in which the donor was out to bleed the patient as soon as the latter showed signs of incipient vitality.

These expressions of colonial nationalism reflect, of course, an altogether one-sided view. Investment in the Dependent Empire is actuated by the same motives and governed by the same rules as investment elsewhere. There is nothing peculiarly iniquitous in the operation of extraneous capital when it operates on colonial territory. The whole subject has been confused by the imperious tyranny of one of those words in the English language

which for a season or more become charged with emotion. The word is "exploitation." It has a double meaning. Public entertainers may exploit their talents without incurring moral obliquity ; but an investor, in exploiting his savings to promote commerce or industry, comes under moral suspicion not only as the exploiter of his savings but as the exploiter of his fellow-creatures through the employment of his savings. It is obvious that if such savings had been persistently withheld from enterprise within the Dependent Empire, its peoples could never have been provided with the rudiments of wealth. It can, of course, be argued that they would have been better without them. But mankind rejects this argument in practice. Diogenes may have admirers ; but he has no imitators. The dependent peoples must therefore be thankful that the cupidity of extraneous investors (if they insist on emphasising the profit motive) has put them into business. It is true that the interest on most investments in the Dependent Empire represents wealth which once created must be transferred overseas. This expatriation of wealth is inevitable. If a solicitor at Stoke-on-Trent invests his savings in a project for a new hotel at Torquay, his dividends (if any), having been credited to his bank account, pass into the economic bloodstream of the United Kingdom for the benefit of Stoke-on-Trent and Torquay alike—unless of course he elects, and is permitted by present-day financial regulations, to remit the money abroad. But the probability, in the hypothetical case selected, is that home enterprise is the gainer, if only through an increase in the receipts of some cinema in the Potteries or in the takings of the football pools. If, on the other hand, the same solicitor invests his savings in a mining corporation operating in the Gold Coast, his dividends, unless applied to further investment or to spending in the Gold Coast, are of no benefit to the country in which they originated. At the same time it would be absurd to deny a very substantial contingent

benefit to a dependency from any enterprise built up on extraneous capital. Apart from more or less permanent assets in the form of plant, equipment, etc. pecuniary benefit is derived in wages and in taxes payable on the profits of all undertakings. If mining industry is involved, the dependency is entitled to a special degree of consideration in the share-out of the proceeds. For not only is there a transfer of wealth in the form of dividends payable to investors, but there is a physical removal of diamonds, gold, copper, tin, or whatever it may be, that permanently diminishes the basic asset. Capital, in fact, as well as interest is being taken out. Minerals and mineral oils are wasting assets, and the wastage should be set-off by compensatory benefits to the country which is the loser. In the Dependent Empire there are other wasting assets of a comparable character to mineral resources, such as valuable forests. But little extraneous capital has been invested in the extraction and export of the luxury hardwoods which grow in the tropics. British Honduras\* is an example of a dependency in which at one time forests were gutted by the removal of valuable species without adequate measures for regeneration. But when British Honduranian chicle (which is tapped for chewing-gum) and mahogany were plundered and squandered, the plunderers and squanderers were mostly British Honduranians. They are accountable for their misdeeds to their own posterity.

The investor is more readily taken to task for appropriating the lion's share of wealth created through the toil of others (amongst other things) than for the greater iniquity of destroying wealth-producing assets which should be held in trust for future generations.

Short of a general discussion of the capitalist system, it would seem that the criticism of colonial nationalists are fairly answered so long as industry makes a fair contribution to public revenue through taxation. Of the fairness of past contributions there is no exact calculus.

Indisputably, in recent years an increasingly large contribution has been paid into the public revenues of the dependencies from wealth created by outside capital. A greater proportion of the same wealth has been diverted from shareholders' profits into the pockets of local wage-earners. Representatives of capital do not need the admonitions of the champions of labour to realise that a reasonable standard of performance in industry is incompatible with inferior conditions of employment. Doubtless they have had encouragement from outside their own camp to conform to standards demanded by organised labour in the world of European industry. White labour has felt itself entrusted with a watching brief on behalf of its Asian or African counterpart. The backward brethren have been initiated into the technique of self-protection, notably in the matter of collective bargaining. Trade unions are now a firmly established element in the economic life of the dependent peoples. Altogether there are already more than seven hundred trade unions in the Dependent Empire. Asian and African wage-earners have, almost literally, walked into positions of vantage which it took their European forerunners and mentors the best part of a century of tough struggle to conquer. If, as consumers, they have had to take expensive goods, not always of high quality, or else to go without, as when the Ottawa Agreement of 1932 raised tariff barriers against the sources of cheap supply in Eastern Asia, and if they have thereby made an involuntary contribution to the takings of white wage-earners at trade-union rates, they have at least been compensated by the collective solicitude and support of the accredited leaders of labour in this country.

The economic anæmia of the Dependent Empire is due, of course, to more deeply seated causes than the mechanics of the capitalist system. While it is generally true that enterprise is capitalised from outside sources, there are many natives or permanent residents in this

or that part of the Dependent Empire with capital to dispose of. In Malaya, of course, domestic capital has accumulated to such an extent that the country can exhibit authentic millionaires amongst its citizens whose millions are "ploughed back" into the soil of Malaya. But there is hardly a dependency where there are not a few members of higher income-groups amongst the permanently domiciled population. In the Dependent Empire, as elsewhere, though not so easily, wage-earners become substantial capitalists by thrift, ability or good fortune. In several dependencies a small plutocracy of Indians, whose fathers or grandfathers in many instances were coolies on plantation estates, is a feature of society. In the West Indies there are many wealthy merchants of genuinely West Indian origin and antecedents. Even in tropical Africa there are Africans eligible to be rated as capitalists. It would be interesting to know how far the surplus wealth at the disposal of such potential investors has been employed in the economic development of the countries to which they belong.

Comparatively little ; so, at least, it would seem, to judge from one outstanding feature of the economic pattern of the Dependent Empire. That is the specialised production of some food-stuff or agricultural raw material for export and sale in world markets ; sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rubber, palm-oil, or whatever it may be. Such were the products which tropical or semi-tropical countries could offer for advantageous use to the countries which the Industrial Revolution had transformed into the world's workshops. Capitalist enterprise was concerned to secure the products, not to secure a balanced economy in some part of a remote continent where they were to be found.

Thus it came about that in some dependencies almost every acre of ground amenable to cultivation was brought under one single crop, little, if any, space being left even for food crops on a small scale. Hence the frequency

of the dependency which relies almost, if not entirely, on a single crop ; a phenomenon widely deplored in a world of alternating booms and slumps, of fluctuating prices, of quotas and restrictions. But in the hey-day of capitalist enterprise primary producers were not growing coffee as fuel for the boilers of locomotives or bananas for field manure. Undisturbed by sinister portents, capitalist enterprise committed the Dependent Empire, more particularly by methods generally known as plantation development, to the agricultural career dictated by its physical endowment. Plantation development is the natural outcome of extraneous investment in primary production. It exhibits minor variations of method and organisation in different parts of the Dependent Empire, but in essentials it is identical throughout. It means production by Europeans or non-Europeans of roughly equivalent resources and attainments. It embraces the production of all the export crops of the West Indies and the neighbouring mainland dependency of British Guiana. It prevails in the dependencies of the eastern hemisphere ; and it is in evidence in East and Central Africa. Only in West Africa is it unrepresented. It originated in the seventeenth century when planter-colonists from Europe first settled in semi-tropical countries in and around the Caribbean Sea. Its first demand is for a valid title to land and security of tenure. Its exponents may be a single individual, such as a settler-planter or settler-farmer, or a large corporation with share capital. Its essential feature is that its methods and standard of performance are European. Colonial sugar is almost entirely a product of plantation development. So is colonial coffee, ever since the days when more than a hundred years ago the news spread through Ceylon (which has now been promoted to self-governing status) of the wonderful yield of the coffee plants lately tried out, with the result that colonial governors, judges of the High Court, military officers on garrison service and even colonial clergy were

soon jostling one another in indecent haste to acquire land on which to cultivate so lucrative a plant. Tea, which succeeded coffee in Ceylon, is also a product of plantation development. So are rubber, sisal, tobacco and other notable export crops of the Dependent Empire. Plantation development, in effect, represents the outlook and the aptitudes of European enterprise. It represents high-powered progressive and scientific agriculture, with an enlightened appreciation of the uses of the entomologist, the mycologist and the bio-chemist. It need not live from hand to mouth, but can yield and take up slack to equalise returns over good and bad years. It has both the assets and the organisation to get credit on good terms. It has the equipment to process its product for export to the best advantage for shipment and sale. It can stand on its own feet in meeting powerful combinations of buyers and in bargaining for a fair share in the proceeds of ultimate sales of its product in overseas markets. In ministerial offices and august committee-rooms the manner of its delegates is self-possessed and their language is sweetly reasonable. It can state a case in a document reflecting first-rate legal advice and the skilful penmanship of accomplished draftsmen. In some dependencies, where old-fashioned family estates survive or have been replaced by locally organised companies, financial methods may sometimes appear suspect to strict orthodoxy. The importunities of a horde of esurient relatives or esurient local shareholders closely united by family or social ties may be difficult to resist and dividends may be distributed with imprudent readiness. But old uncle James, the last of the plantocrats of Long Mountain estate which has been in his family for generations, no less than the manager of the Combined Eastern Estates Company, registered in London, who is quietly waiting for the merger in which he is confident that Uncle James must soon acquiesce, is a member of the Planters' Association which charters ships, maintains an agent in London, and knows all there



is to know about prices and speculation in "futures" and the behaviour of brokers in Mincing Lane. Asians, though more conspicuous in commerce than in agricultural enterprise, have also entered the field of plantation development in some parts of the Dependent Empire. As primary producers, no less than as merchants, financiers or manufacturers, they are equally adept in holding their own under strenuous competitive conditions. A striking testimonial to the efficiency of plantation development is the fact that though shaken by the shocks of the decade 1930-40, it was never in serious danger of disruption, and that when the exigencies of war called for an intensive effort of production it reacted with remarkable vigour.

Yet the efficiency of plantation development is often dearly bought. In the tropics, skill and experience at a high level may be very costly commodities. In the temperate zones which are his natural habitat the European may be able to tolerate a certain degree of austerity without serious loss of efficiency—but not in the tropics. In the more temperate and benign parts of the sub-tropics like the West Indies or the islands of the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, successive generations of whites or near-whites have made their homes and become acclimatised without degeneracy. Here is a reservoir of ability on which plantation development may draw without unduly high cost. Such communities may throw up a certain amount of what the Americans would call poor white trash, but there are not a few whites of both ability and character. And there are at least as many near-whites of equally good quality. Outside tropical Africa plantation development may congratulate itself on the possession of an upper story in its structure which is cheap at the price. In tropical Africa the situation is different. White settlement in East Africa is only now yielding its first instalment of African-born Europeans. Their quality has hardly been tested as yet. The East African settler is still a person with two homes, and so

an extremely expensive creature. The effects of the war on the tempo of social and economic change in this country may accelerate the process by which the half-exiles of Kenya, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia complete an environmental break with the past and come to feel completely identified with Africa. Much will depend on political developments. In the meantime plantation development in tropical Africa is a costly business, though less so than in the past. Among the survivors of a past generation of exiles there are some who can recall memories of a sumptuous bungalow with a westerly outlook over a tropical sea, occupied by the overseas representative of a corporation registered in London. Every evening the master of the house would lift the glass containing his "sundowner" to salute the setting sun with the formula "Another day off the calendar and another fifty rupees in the Bank in London." This evening rite invested with the solemnity of a tropical Angelus must have propitiated the particular saint who patronises white exiles in the tropics. The house in which the former exile now lives in retirement in southern England was bought out of savings accumulated during his career overseas, while the education of his children at one of the most expensive boarding-schools in this country is being largely paid for out of the proceeds of insurance policies bought from the same source. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that plantation development, when compelled to recruit home-born talent in order to secure managerial staff of the necessary competence, must pay salaries which allow the recipient to put by a reserve of about half the amount received. Although Europeans have often remained for long consecutive periods in the worst kinds of tropical climate without apparently serious consequences, it is generally agreed that the efficiency, if not the morale, of the tropical exile runs down rather quickly. A high standard of comfort while on service overseas, the means of maintaining two households in

many instances, liberal leave at fairly frequent intervals with free passage or equivalent allowances, a margin for regular savings—these are some of the legitimate and recognised demands which the European employed in the tropics makes on his employers. To meet them the employers must also maintain a reserve of equally costly staff for the replacement of absentees. Every year from the exile communities overseas a contingent gleefully sets out for home, “all money and no clothes,” deservedly intent on enjoyment according to its lights, whether those lights may lead to the Stadium at Wembley or the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, to the paddock at Aintree on the day of the Grand National or up the steps of the National Gallery. Every year a contingent returns less gleefully, “all clothes and no money.”

It is the home country, incidentally, and not the Dependent Empire which gets the money and which, within the limits of present-day austerity, provides the clothes. The costly creatures of plantation development and also of European commercial enterprise, bring little pecuniary grist to the local mill. The money which they save is transferred for spending at home, like the profits of shareholders. Hence another irritant to colonial nationalists. In a certain dependency not long ago there was much local indignation when, on opening a branch, Barclays Bank (Dominion and Overseas) preferred to recruit cashiers from overseas rather than draw on the local talent available. Another instance, so the commentators observed,<sup>1</sup> of the advantage of a Colonial Empire as a means of providing good jobs for the young men of the mother country. No doubt. But it is quite certain that neither Barclays Bank nor any other corporation operating in the Dependent Empire would allow itself the luxury of overseas recruitment on sentimental grounds. Commercial enterprise and plantation development are both equally reluctant to carry a more costly staff than is needed for efficiency. The European staff

of commercial firms sometimes appears unduly extravagant. In places where there is keen competition between rival firms there is apt to be a certain inflation in both the numbers and the status of Europeans employed. Some degree of ostentation may be thought indispensable for reasons of prestige, particularly in the attraction of Asian custom, and lavish entertainment and a high standard of sartorial elegance and domestic equipment may be judged a necessary part of commercial showmanship and salesmanship.

Plantation development by no means holds the whole field in the agricultural economy of the Dependent Empire. Native cultivators are also very extensively engaged on production for export. Native cultivation makes an important contribution to the export crops of the eastern part of the Dependent Empire. In East and Central Africa it is active, though overshadowed by plantation development in both Kenya and Nyasaland. In Uganda and Zanzibar it has a virtual monopoly of production. But its main area of operation, where it is the only agency of production, is the area of some half a million square miles which comprises the four West African dependencies of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

Unlike plantation development, native cultivation is uncatalysed, or almost uncatalysed, production. Native cultivation is nevertheless set in motion by the operations of extraneous capital. Without occupying the land and while leaving primary production in native hands, extraneous enterprise establishes its agencies to appropriate the product. It provides the credit facilities and the marketing apparatus. It is the indispensable irrigator of native cultivation. Statistically the performance of native cultivation is impressive. Before the war Nigeria and the Gold Coast produced more than half the world's cocoa supply though their combined output has since fallen by about one-fifth. Vegetable oils and fats are the other most noteworthy product of native cultivation. Nigeria

and the Gambia together produce about 350,000 tons of ground-nuts a year ; and Nigeria and the Gold Coast together about 550,000 tons of palm kernels and palm oil. Native cultivation enters into the calculations of big business. Its output goes into the mouths of the general public in this and other countries. It is linked to huge corporations like Unilever and Cadbury. Its output has overflowed the British market and by its entry into foreign markets has become an important factor in multi-lateral trade. But it lacks the stability of plantation development. The African who grows cocoa in the Gold Coast or cotton in Uganda is more often than not a highly intelligent individual. But it would be absurd to claim for him experience, attainments and financial resources comparable with those of a European rubber-planter in Malaya or the European corporation operating a sugar estate in British Guiana. In one respect the native cultivator is more advantageously placed. He escapes the heavy financial burden of a costly managerial staff. But the community to which he belongs has to pay for his tuition and guidance by the state. Production has to be supervised by a corps of benevolent and competent official experts. The cultivator has to be protected from the rapacity of money-lenders and the predatory propensities of buyers. Above all, he must be weaned from injurious methods of cultivation. He must be initiated in the exacting methods of warfare against the insidious enemies of the precious plant which lurk in soil or leaf. When "die-back" threatens the cocoa plants of the Gold Coast or the clove trees of Zanzibar show signs of exhaustion, the factor of human error aggravates anxiety in a far greater degree than when "blister blight" assails the tea-bushes of some European planter in Ceylon. On grounds of efficiency alone the replacement of native cultivation by plantation development would be welcome. But on other grounds the further extension of plantation development, at least in tropical Africa, is unwelcome.

Even the United Africa Company, a subsidiary of Unilever, armed with unimpeachable credentials of efficiency, has been discouraged by official authority from acquiring land for plantation development in West Africa. The truth is that the establishment of plantation development in East Africa has left some awkward legacies. Land occupied by Africans was alienated to European corporations or individuals in circumstances which are doubtfully defensible in the light of principles now professed. There are disquieting memories of chiefs, less sophisticated than their successors, making over to European negotiators delectable tracts of lands in exchange for a length of gaudy calico. Valuable land alienated to Europeans has on occasion been left undeveloped and set aside for speculative purposes. The recruitment of African labour for plantation development often arouses lively controversy. In tropical Africa plantation development, at least under private enterprise, has become suspect. How far Africans have a legitimate grievance against plantation development on the score of dispossession of land held by their tribal forefathers is a hotly debated question. It would be a gross exaggeration to say that European enterprise has created a landless African proletariat. It is even debatable whether the alienation of the best land for the production of export crops by plantation development, even at the immediate cost of some dispossession of Africans, would not be more beneficial to native Africa in the long run by increasing its national income. To such questions there is no ready answer. The claims of efficiency as against other human values must remain unsettled. In the meantime plantation development, if foiled in its aims in tropical Africa, may find other authorities in other countries more accommodating than the British towards its projects. Tropical Africa may be made safe for native cultivation only to find its particular market assailed by competition from some new quarter. "There must be readiness to enable the African cultivator to break away

from his economically weak and primitive forms of cultivation. Where this cannot be achieved, no amount of benevolent assistance for social services can avail to improve the lot of the people." Such is the verdict of a colonial governor<sup>1</sup> of ripe experience. In a highly competitive world the non-European cultivator needs to learn, and to learn quickly.

But the real weakness of the Dependent Empire does not lie in imperfect methods of agricultural production, but in the fact that its economy is almost entirely agricultural. There seems little prospect of any great variations ; though there is hope of a rising demand for the products of tropical agriculture when, as recently, it was declared in public on the highest authority that any large-scale industry based on plant products would need starch and sugar for its basic raw materials ; or that the sucrose content of sugar was now recognised as a source of many important acids ; or that the internal combustion engine might give sugar a new and permanent importance. Mining industries are few and far between. The tin-mining industry of Malaya and the copper-mining industry of Northern Rhodesia are of outstanding importance ; but, like other minerals used in manufacturing industry, both tin and copper are liable to restricted demand except in wartime, and there is no certainty that the mines of Malaya and Northern Rhodesia will continue to be worked to full capacity. There are no extensive deposits of coal or of mineral oils of proved quality. In short, the conditions for the establishment of manufacturing industries are lacking. Herein lies the economic weakness of the Dependent Empire and the fatality of arrested development.

The economy of the Dependent Empire, being limited almost entirely to primary production for export or for subsistence, fails to sustain a high level of employment. Earning-power is insufficient in volume and radius of

<sup>1</sup> Sir Philip Mitchell.

distribution to create a strong local market for manufacturing industry and so to attract capital to this form of industry. Full time employment for wages is narrowly restricted. The bulk of such employment is in government services, notably transport of all kinds, and in other public utilities. Productive enterprise offers little full-time employment. The principal export crops with which plantation development is concerned make no great call on labour, or do so only for short seasonal periods. Native cultivation is a family affair. It does not hire labour. Whether man-power would be forthcoming for new industries is a question to which the answer must be conjectural. The African is idle, though probably neither more nor less so than the white man. The West Indian negro is also idle, his superlative idleness being one of the fixed beliefs of white and near-white society. The Asian, or at least the India coolie, is accounted rather less idle. But the great incentive to idleness, in the Dependent Empire as elsewhere, is the lack of "incentive goods." Post-war conditions have made the shortage of such goods particularly acute. But there is a more permanent condition which makes "incentive goods" difficult of access. In the Dependent Empire, with its predominantly agricultural economy and its resulting low level of prosperity, customs duties must contribute an unduly high proportion to the total proceeds of taxation—hence a high price-rate. It is noteworthy that the West Indian negro, in spite of his supposedly superlative idleness, is not unready to seek the alluring rewards of employment on the continent of America, when opportunity offers, just as the natives of Nyasaland are attracted to the mines of the Transvaal. The low cash structure of production in the Dependent Empire, though advantageous for the overseas sale of export crops, is counterbalanced by the disadvantage of a low level of employment.

Another stubborn obstacle to economic progress is the low standard of cultivation in food production for local



consumption. Earnings, already low, are diverted of necessity to the purchase of imported food to satisfy minimum needs. It is significant that reliance on imported food is no longer confined to dependencies in which plantation development has taken up almost all the ground suitable for cultivation. It is extending to tropical Africa. The authority already quoted<sup>1</sup> is explicit when he says : "What we have to do is not to acquiesce in the destruction of still more land by defective economic and agricultural habits and practices." The African peasant must find his way up "the steep and difficult hill which leads from uncapitalised subsistence farming, carried out with hand tools to a form of agriculture which by increasing the production of primary wealth by each unit engaged in it, will enable the standard of living of all to be raised."

Even so, manufacturing industries must lag so long as there is insufficient purchasing power to sustain them. Conversely, only through manufacturing industries (short of a spectacular advance in the location and exploitation of minerals) can the earnings which sustain purchasing power be created. It is difficult to see how the vicious circle can be broken. Generally speaking, cheap sources of industrial power are lacking. All except a few parts of the Dependent Empire are poor in coal and oil. The development of hydro-electric power is a long and costly business. Only now, after more than fifty years of British rule, is a dam being built where the stripling Nile plunges out of Lake Victoria over the Ripon Falls at Jinja in Uganda. This undertaking, which will supply a power-station with a capacity of 2,500,000 kilowatts, raises visions of factories where not only will native products be processed for export, but if capital can be found textiles will be manufactured from Uganda cotton without the deterrent of the detriment to Lancashire which weighed so heavily at the time of the Ottawa agreement

<sup>1</sup> See p. 66

in the early 'thirties. Only in Malaya, on the eastern fringe of the Dependent Empire, is there the assurance of achievement which only achievement itself can give. For nothing succeeds like success and "unto every one that hath shall be given. . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." This utterance can be quoted as an economic truism. In many of the smaller islands which lie on the Dependent Empire's western fringe, bush-covered heaps of derelict machinery and masonry lying by West Indian roadsides bear witness to abortive attempts in the past to set up small manufacturing industries. In some of these islands the total population is only a few thousands. The total population of the British West Indies is less than four millions. Proposals are now on foot for closer union, but for more than a century these dependencies have lived in mutual segregation under separate administrations. The rusty roadside scrap is a commentary on the weakness of their rural economy and the heavy price of their isolation. In Trinidad a private company has been formed for the production of industrial undertakings. But Trinidad has mineral oils, and British Guiana nearby has minerals. In Barbados a cotton-spinning plant has been set up and a local pottery industry is being developed. But not by private enterprise. The capital is being provided from public sources for launching these brave undertakings with no buoyant local market and in competition with similar industries elsewhere—notably this country. Even in Jamaica, by far the most populous of all the West Indies, in the financing of new industries public capital is being sought to fill the breach which private capital has failed to fill. On the other side of the Atlantic, as unlike a West Indian island as it is unlike one of the Channel Islands, is Nigeria, the geographical giant of the Dependent Empire. Despite its easy communications, its wide variety of climates and

products, and its twenty-three millions of inhabitants whose forefathers in many instances were familiar with an active Continental trade long before the arrival of the European, there is still no manufacturing industry to speak of. The economic monotony of agricultural production is not quite unrelieved. Mining industries are expanding, and tobacco and textiles are being manufactured. The ubiquitous United Africa Company has found it worth while to add new irons to their fire by installing factories for the local manufacture of soap and plywood for African consumption. But for the most part, in Nigeria, as well as in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, it is left to state agency, if it sees fit, to provide capital from public sources to set manufacturing industry in motion. Private capital holds aloof, leaving West Africa to import what it can afford to consume on the earnings of agricultural production for export ; not only much of the wherewithal to better its diet but most of the wherewithal to equip itself with such basic things as household furniture, cotton textiles, pots and pans, and footwear. In East Africa the story is the same. The creation of a host of official and semi-official organisations to explore the ground proclaims both the urgency of the need for manufacturing industry and the failure of private capital to meet it. A very different story was recently told of Southern Rhodesia by a leading British industrialist on his return from a trip to South Africa. Southern Rhodesia, of course, lies outside the Dependent Empire ; but only just outside. Across its northern frontier lies the dependent territory of Northern Rhodesia. The itinerant industrialist was able to see vests and shirts for native wear being woven from cotton, locally grown and locally spun, and selling in the shops of Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia at a retail price of less than three and sixpence each. The reason becomes clear as the traveller goes on to explain that in the same neighbourhood he saw coal and asbestos mines, steel-smelting plant and hydro-electric equipment.

The venerable African, who not very many years ago attended an assembly of chiefs invited to meet the Prince of Wales (as he then was) with a head-dress consisting of an inverted domestic utensil of a somewhat specialised character and of undoubtedly United Kingdom manufacture, was not only a figure of fun. He was also the demonstrator of a tragic lacuna in the economy of the Dependent Empire.

In so far as tropical Africa is concerned, speculative minds may detect signs of a release from the present vicious circle in developments which, though in no way deriving from capitalist enterprise, may nevertheless arouse its interest in the establishment of manufacturing industries on the soil of the Dependent Empire. With the withdrawal of British power from the Eastern Mediterranean and from India, tropical Africa, both East and West, may become the home of overland lines of imperial communications and a chosen land for the location of troops and airfields. In several parts of the Dependent Empire the war gave a great impetus to the production and processing of local products for consumption by the fighting forces. Service consumption is notoriously ravenous. The supply departments of the services, not to mention the personnel of the fighting and auxiliary forces, have both the means and the will to spend. The future exigencies of imperial strategy may induce capitalist enterprise to equip at least certain areas of British tropical Africa with at least a nucleus of manufacturing industries ; and from such a development economic progress in a new direction may gather momentum. Service contractors, once again, may be amongst the pioneers breaking fresh ground for industrial civilisation.

Industrial civilisation has at least some lively satellites scattered about the Dependent Empire ; compact urban communities, as self-contained as the city states of ancient Greece, some of them concentrated in an area no larger than that of a London borough. To this group belong

Gibraltar, Aden, Hong-Kong, and in a lesser degree such widely different islands as Malta and Singapore. These seaport dependencies have no common economic denominator with the rest of the Dependent Empire. They are not concerned with production. Theirs is the happier lot of handling goods produced by others. They collect and distribute, and some of them finance the operations which enable them to collect and distribute. They service sea-borne commerce along the arteries of world trade. In one respect many of their inhabitants bear a resemblance to the least urban of all the peoples of the Dependent Empire. Much of their wealth is as readily movable as the belongings of the Sons of Ishmael who rove with their beasts on the fringes of the desert in British Somaliland. Such easy migrants as the merchants, bankers and shippers of the seaport dependencies are not the subordinates, but rank amongst the principals of the capitalist enterprise which has moulded the economy of the dependent Empire. Only Singapore is closely linked with a part of the Dependent Empire. It does merchanting for Malaya ; the task of a commercial colossus. Hong-Kong does merchanting for Southern China. In Hong-Kong wares which must first run the gauntlet of bandits, pirates and the requisitioning attentions of predatory military adventurers, reach the haven where, under a British umbrella, merchants and financiers can more safely negotiate contracts and undertake the engagements of orderly trade. The turmoil of the Far East has made Hong-Kong a collecting centre of many cargoes of doubtful antecedents and a haunt of traders of flexible commercial ethics. Hong-Kong introduces a faintly disreputable atmosphere into the Dependent Empire, like the presence of a pawnbroker's shop where stolen goods are known to be received in an otherwise respectable street.

Throughout the Dependent Empire capitalist enterprise has found it necessary to devote itself almost exclusively to the development of primary production. A

rural habit of life dominates Britain's colonial estate. The landscape is generally undistinguished by urban grandeur, undisfigured by urban squalor, and unenlivened by the glitter, the clamour and the crush of urban life. The question may be asked whether the West Indian negro and the native of tropical Africa or of the islands of the Western Pacific would be better off as factory hands than in their present occupations and surroundings. Undoubtedly, in every material sense. If there is one characteristic symptom of economic adolescence in a people, it is the urge to develop manufacturing industry. In the enjoyment of the higher pecuniary rewards the rural landlord yields place to the urban industrialist, the peasant to the *entrepreneur*, the agricultural worker to the man who tends the machine. The age-old myth of Esau and Jacob is perennially re-enacted. Rural beatitudes may be left to the literature of escapism ; at least in the modern world. Acquaintance with the village slums of Trinidad or the wretched kraals of Ankole in Southern Uganda, where humanity houses itself in structures of dried cattle dung, sets rustic bliss in the Dependent Empire in a truer light.

A great evangelist and exponent of both capitalist enterprise and imperial expansion once epitomised his creed in the slogan of "humanity and five per cent." Looking back on the last half century, which marks the first stage in the capitalisation of the Dependent Empire in its full territorial growth, investors might be tempted to think that at five per cent. Cecil Rhodes had pitched the figure too high for them. The sobering experiences of the nineteen-thirties have familiarised them with low and fluctuating prices for the products of their enterprise, with agreements to restrict output as the price of some measure of stability, and with depreciated undertakings working at less than full capacity. Five per cent. has been seen too often falling until it has reached zero and the capitalists have been constrained to live on their

capital, leaving the onlooker in his turn constrained to ask how much humanity is likely to thrive in any economy which in any case is the economy of industrialised Europe in reverse, with the great majority pegged down to cultivation for subsistence, a few to the cultivation of export crops, and only a small minority on the pay-roll for regular wages.

Several countries, including some within the British Commonwealth have gone through three main stages of economic development. The first stage is that of producing raw materials for export, and the second that of improving them by processing before export. During these stages manufactured goods have been imported in exchange. The third stage is the stage at which manufacturing industries are established in the home country. The transition from the first to the second stage may be easy ; that from the second to the third must almost certainly be difficult. In attacking the difficulty in the Dependent Empire Britain is applying methods so novel that they deserve the title of a "New Deal."

## CHAPTER IV

### COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE "NEW DEAL"

IN Bath, Cheltenham or Tunbridge Wells there must still survive some octogenarian colonial governor in retirement who is provoked to rueful comment by the news that some member of the Government of the day has selected colonial development as the subject of a broadcast talk on the Home Service of the B.B.C. or of a public speech in Westminster Hall. "Colonial development? I wish it had come in my time." So might a great professional bowler of a past generation of cricketers speak wistfully of the modern l.b.w. rule.

"Whenever I made any development proposals": thus the voice from the big arm-chair near the fireside, "I was told that development must depend on the natural operation of economic factors. That was the phrase they always used. They had no use for a man with constructive ideas."

And when a confident voice resonant with political righteousness comes over the air to retail imposing statistics of thousands of miles of railway lines completed or projected, or of thousands of miles of "all-season" roads in distant tropical lands, it stirs resentful memories in the octogenarian listener of creative ardours quenched by official cold water, of rebukes discreetly but unmistakably conveyed in official despatches drafted by circumspect bureaucrats in Whitehall. "If only they had let me carry out that reclamation scheme and build the tunnel to take the railway through the hills, they would have had enough rice to feed the whole group. But they would not have it. All that they wanted was a safe man in command and a balanced budget. . . ."



A quarter of a century ago in the dependent Empire two principles governed official policy. In the first place public undertakings were kept strictly within the requirements of established private enterprise. There was a marked aversion to the building of roads and railways, for example, to open up undeveloped country in the hope that private enterprise would follow. The certainty of sufficient earnings to make public undertakings self-supporting had to be established, as far as certainty is possible in human affairs, before Whitehall would countenance development schemes within the sphere recognised to belong to the state as distinct from private enterprise. Ambitious proconsuls might chafe, but the bureaucrats of Whitehall were wise in their generation. They preferred to be guided by "the natural operation of economic factors." They knew well enough that "the City" would soon show ominous activity as soon as some substantial set of interests became concerned at the lack of public facilities for capitalist enterprise in this or that part of the Dependent Empire. There is, after all, a natural equation between the activity of private enterprise and the earning capacity of public undertakings. Such undertakings, once their credentials were judged unimpeachable, were provided readily enough through another process in "the natural operations of economic factors." The forces of capital came forward to lend to the state the wherewithal to build and equip docks and railways, to bridge ravines, to drive tunnels through hills and to fit out dredgers for the reclamation of swamps. Not only were public loans floated to finance such projects, but capital in search of profitable employment was called upon to increase the output of capital goods from the factories of the industrial world to meet new orders from the Dependent Empire. More than one disgruntled colonial governor, whose lamentations over the lack of vision in the bureaucrats of Whitehall have long since been forgotten, owes them an unacknowledged debt of

gratitude for saving proconsular genius from the perpetuation of its memory only in the rusty skeleton of some mechanical dinosaur bearing a name such as "Smithson's Folly."

The second principle which governed official policy a quarter of a century ago was closely allied to the first. It was that public expenditure on social services must be within the capacity of the local exchequer. In other words, private enterprise was recognised as conditioning social welfare as well as economic development. The taxable wealth created by enterprise provided the only source from which the establishment and maintenance of social services could be financed.

A different doctrine now prevails. There is no longer the same disposition as there was a quarter of a century ago to acquiesce in "the natural operation of economic factors." The tradition of the "Manchester" school has fallen into disrepute. *Laissez-faire* has become a term of opprobrium, to be cast at Mr. Winston Churchill by his political opponents to discredit Conservative theory and practice. In the Dependent Empire both national and international events have given a new direction to official policy. It is no longer thought proper that economic and social welfare in the Dependent Empire should hinge on the vagaries of private enterprise. Planned development in all directions under public control is the order of the day. The original cohort of the *Pax Britannica* has changed its colours and mobilised many new recruits. Beside the veterans like the magistrate and the policeman the practitioners of new arts and sciences have taken their stand in the ranks. The secular missionaries of the creative modern state, including the town-and-country planner, are now carried on the strength.

From the turn of the last century up to the first world war official policy followed traditional lines. Private enterprise kept the uneven tenor of its way, creating prosperity in some parts of the Dependent Empire and

neglecting others. The abundant natural resources of Malaya, which nature herself had done much to camouflage, were at length discovered and turned to account. On the eastern fringe of the Dependent Empire the foundations of prosperity were laid. British tropical Africa also took in an increasing volume of capital, running into hundreds of millions of pounds. In other parts of the Dependent Empire fresh capital was chiefly devoted to the preservation of existing undertakings without very notable economic advance. In some dependencies industries languished through lack of incentive to inject fresh capital ; and in a few national wealth sunk so low that public budgets could only be balanced at a high enough level to maintain the rudiments of civilised administration by means of annual doles from the imperial treasury. There was no national interest in the Dependent Empire as a whole, and no widespread interest in any particular part of it. It never represented a compact and substantial national asset like India. Its affairs were seldom in the public eye. A spectacular incident like an earthquake might bring Jamaica momentarily into the limelight. Hong-Kong might enjoy an ephemeral notoriety through occasional efforts to focus public attention on an Oriental social custom which ordains that marriage dowries are honourably earned through organised prostitution. But generally speaking the dependent Empire failed to make news. It escaped discussion in Parliament and in the press. Powerful vested interests or pressure groups seldom found occasion to become vocal over its affairs. The dependent peoples, scattered about the world, remained out of sight and out of mind. The heroic age of the discovery of tropical Africa and of the liquidation of the slave-trade was over. Pioneers armed with the gospel of Christ and the medicine chest had yielded place to editors of parish magazines and compilers of replies to auditor's queries about medical stores. The fortunes of the dependent peoples were

unobtrusively and sedately presided over, not by a separate department of State, but by the department primarily concerned with the affairs of the self-governing dominions or until well into the present century, in many instances, notably in tropical African territories, by the Foreign Office.

The first world war, in which the military operations of the European contestants were carried into parts of the Dependent Empire, brought a new and more critical interest to bear on the dependent peoples. As compared with their contribution to the common effort in the last world war, their performance in the first one was very modest. No great demands were made on them either for man-power or supplies. Britain and her allies were not then deprived of access to whole areas of world supply. At the same time some dependencies enjoyed a phase of unparalleled prosperity as a result of higher prices and a rising demand for their staple exports ; so much so that cynics have suggested that in a revised prayer-book for dependent peoples there should be a litany with the invocation, "Grant war in our time, O Lord !" In any event the settlement desired at the end of the war by the victorious belligerents involved the deprivation of Germany of her overseas territories. The victors fortified their claims to new territory in Africa and elsewhere with appeals to the superiority of their past performance and with professions of still better intentions in the future. In a reaffirmation of aims and principles, the relationship of Britain to her dependent peoples was declared to be one of trusteeship. The moral, as well as the material obligations implicit on the term, were accepted. In fact the main emphasis was on the moral obligations. The conception of a national responsibility for the welfare of subordinate peoples under British rule or allegiance is, of course, not new. It is inherent in the great humanitarian traditions of the early nineteenth century. Even earlier, in 1785, Edmund Burke had declared, in a

debate about India in the House of Commons, that the power of government over mankind must somehow be exercised in the interests of the governed. "We are on a conspicuous stage," he added in a word of warning, "and the world marks our demeanour." In the years following the first world war Britain, in common with other colonial powers, was on a conspicuous stage. National obligations towards backward people gained a new significance, and new encouragement was given to national rectitude. Thirty years earlier the emphasis had been rather on the ethics of international behaviour in colonial dependencies; on the obligations of a commercial trusteeship which would ensure equality of commercial opportunity for the competing nations of the world. The emphasis had now shifted to the claims of dependent peoples *vis-à-vis* Colonial Powers. In former German territories in tropical Africa, Britain was anxious to appear in the guise of a liberator of the oppressed, or at least as a welcome protector of peoples too immature for the literal application to them of President Wilson's formula proclaiming the rights of peoples to dispose of their own destinies. A basis of local support was sought for the claim to deprive Germany, as a moral delinquent, of the right to rule over backward peoples. In what was German East Africa before it passed under British mandate with the new name of Tanganyika Territory, the views of native chiefs were canvassed to discover whether the substitution of British for German administration would be welcome. The majority opinion was, not unnaturally, flattering to the canvassing authorities whose forces were in effective occupation of the country. But one ancient chieftain returned an emphatic negative, declaring roundly that he preferred the Germans who refrained from interference in the affairs of his tribe and were indifferent to the fact that he beat his wives. "Stout fellow," was the comment marginally annotated on the official document reporting this minority opinion,

in the handwriting of the official <sup>1</sup> who subsequently became the first British Governor of Tanganyika.

The new outlook was more clearly demonstrated in 1923. Developments in Kenya elicited a declaration by the Government in this country that while the interests of native peoples were in conflict with those of immigrant communities, the former and not the latter must prevail. In 1925 the same principle was accepted by Parliament as applicable to the whole dependent Empire, although it is not by any means universally accepted without reservation by representative opinion in this country. It would need some casuistry to reconcile the doctrine of the paramountcy of African interests with the claim of the European settlers in Kenya, recently reaffirmed by their recognised leaders, to political superiority on racial grounds—a claim entirely consistent with South African theory and practice. Fortunately no situation has arisen involving a precise and uncompromising interpretation of the principle just mentioned. There is no longer any considerable flow of immigration, either European or Asian, into any part of the Dependent Empire; but without any influx of immigrants there are innumerable instances in which the interests of dependent peoples may appear to conflict with those of a ruling power or of its nationals. The requirements of European enterprise in the native labour market are one obvious example. Military requirements are another. In both those directions Britain felt constrained to set an example. The training of Africans for military purposes was one feature of German policy which Britain repudiated with alacrity, though in this respect British behaviour was in marked contrast with that of France, then her ally. Compulsory military service, and everything vaguely known as militarism, were associated with Germany's worst national vices, and repugnant to the liberal tradition in this country. The conscription of labour was equally

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Horace Byatt.

abhorrent to the same tradition. Here, more than in any other sphere, official vigilance kept a close watch on British performance in the Dependent Empire. In 1919 when some Quaker missionaries in a certain dependency used their influence to challenge the propriety of the somewhat coercive measures by which African labour had been recruited for employment by a particular European corporation, a colonial governor was content to reply that the Africans so recruited were being given the benefit of healthy physical exercise. So perfunctory a defence is almost reminiscent of the house prefect's summary injunction to a small boy in the lower school to don his shorts and jersey and go for a run on a rainy afternoon. By 1923 the views of colonial governments were much more staid and their behaviour much more circumspect. Yet, it was in the absence of questionable restraints on individual liberty rather than in any positive measures of economic or social betterment that Britain's sharpened conscience of her duties towards her dependent peoples was reflected in the decade after the first world war. The benefits of Asians and Africans under British rule were still associated with protection from arbitrary acts of authority and with the civic freedoms, described in eloquent phrase by Mr. Winston Churchill on a memorable occasion, as enshrined in those title deeds of humanity which repose in the capital city of the British Commonwealth. Such were the credentials which Britain brought to Geneva to lay before the League of Nations, and was prepared to exhibit to any tribunal of world opinion. It was perhaps unfortunate that during the nineteen-twenties orthodox socialism was more concerned with an academic advocacy of international administration in all colonial territories than with a serious study of the achievements and methods of the different Colonial Powers.

It was not until 1929 that something in the nature of a New Deal for the Dependent Empire was foreshadowed.

In that year an Act of Parliament was passed known as the Colonial Development Act. The Act was important as a forerunner of later measures rather than in its conception or immediate results. It set up a fund for which an amount of £1,000,000 was provided annually from imperial funds (or, in other words, by the tax-payer in this country) to finance schemes of development in the Dependent Empire. The intention of the measure, as specifically defined, was to promote commerce with, or industry in, the United Kingdom. Its date is significant. It recalls the great slump at the end of the nineteen-twenties and the widespread industrial depression and unemployment which followed. The Act was primarily designed to alleviate domestic difficulties at home. It seemed that a harassed government in search of remedies had suddenly thought of the Dependent Empire as a customer who had been overlooked. The Act was in no way the outcome of any new attitude towards the Dependent Empire's economic needs. It was hoped that the fund provided would enable colonial governments to place orders in this country, particularly for capital goods of the kind required for public undertakings, and so benefit home industry. The sponsors of the Act were thinking in terms of past history. Docks, railways, bridges and works of that description were the undertakings associated in their minds with the term "development." One means of relief for unemployment at home was to be found in equipping the Dependent Empire with additional public utilities.

¶The Act of 1929 was (to use the popular idiom of a later date) a flop. Mr. J. H. Thomas, then Colonial Secretary, a well-known adept in the use of contemporary popular idiom, declared to a solemn assemblage of Colonial Governors within a short time of the passage of the Act that he was fed up with its results. The annual allotment of £1,000,000 was never taken up in full. The Dependent Empire proved a poor customer. There was



no spate of orders for capital goods to reinvigorate home industry. The failure of the Act is an illuminating commentary on the limitations of economic development in the Dependent Empire. In the more prosperous territories public undertakings, having progressed *pari passu* with private enterprise, were not needed. In less prosperous territories they were not only not needed, because enterprise was inactive, but the recurrent liabilities which they involved were beyond the financial capacity of the territories concerned. The failure of the Act demonstrated the natural equation between public undertakings and the economic achievements of private enterprise, and between both and the resources of public finance. The Act was also instrumental in bringing home the wide difference in social services and standards of well-being between the more prosperous and less prosperous parts of the Dependent Empire. In the nineteen-thirties when the Dependent Empire was afflicted by the prevailing world-wide depression and enterprise wilted under the blight of low prices and restricted output, it became increasingly apparent that the old conception of human well-being as deriving from the enjoyment of civic rights and protection from oppression was no longer adequate. There were other natural and imprescriptible rights of man than the "life, liberty, and the pursuit of human happiness," or than "liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression," or rights enunciated in any other formula by political philosophers of a by-gone age. In the prevailing economic distress economic rights were asserted with increasing insistence.

In the recognition of the economic rights of dependent peoples the year 1940 is an important milestone. It marks the enactment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The Act, which was passed at a time of one of the greatest crises in our national history, provided for a contribution of £5,000,000 a year from the imperial exchequer (*i.e.* from the home taxpayer's pocket) for a

period of ten years, plus a further annual contribution of £500,000 for research, in order to finance schemes for any purpose likely to promote the development of the resources of any dependency or the welfare of its people. The contribution, when compared with the astronomical figures of national expenditure during the war, may seem meagre. But any larger contribution could have had no more than a token value. The shortage of man-power, materials and transport facilities set an obvious and stringent limit to immediate activity of the kind envisaged in the Act. But the real significance of the Act lies in the acceptance, rightly or wrongly, of the equal claims of dependent peoples, either to economic development or to social welfare as though the latter were independent of the former and attainable without it. The Act was tantamount to unlimited liability in imperial charity. Such at least is its hard logic. For only by charity can means of social welfare be provided for dependent territories without natural resources worthy of economic exploitation and so deficient in earning power. Official spokesmen are at pains to repudiate the suggestion of a permanent dole for the peoples of the depressed areas of the British Empire. There is no dearth of homilies on the merits of self-help. For charity, however welcome, is *unflattering to its recipients*. However discreetly administered it is a challenge to self-respect. It implies failure, however excusable such failure may be. And yet economic failure, or at least economic weakness, may be excusable because inevitable. On the face of it there is an almost alarming degree of quixotism in an attempt to introduce a standard of social services which cannot become self-supporting on a purely objective calculation of available natural resources. Welfare centres and pre-natal clinics may be staffed and equipped with the costly expert staff and physical requisites needed. Schools may be built ; instructors and text-books may be provided. Laboratories may be opened and filled with first-rate apparatus. But

how long can the money go on flowing from the charitable coffers of the imperial exchequer? More and more trained workers of superior attainments; more and more drugs; more and more instruments; more and more text-books. It is a perilously near approach to *reductio ad absurdum* if the illiterate advance to literacy only to find that their earning power is so low in their economic backwater that purchase of a cheap book in a Penguin series or a library subscription costs the equivalent of their weekly income; and that, having learned to read, all that they can afford to read is a forbidding warning that trespassers will be prosecuted or an injunction, in a suitably macabre setting, to keep death off the roads.

A contemporary politician in a public address described the aim of the New Deal for the Dependent Empire, inaugurated in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, as designed to make their people, in the language of the nursery rhyme, "healthy, wealthy and wise." Without health and wisdom the road to wealth may be closed. But health and wisdom (allied to knowledge) are not in themselves sufficient to open the road to wealth. Physical fitness, mental ability and technical skill may yet need the sustenance of extraneous charity *ad infinitum* unless indigenous sources of wealth can be opened up. Superior political standards and institutions may be the natural reward of a community capable of the necessary degree of self-discipline in the interests of political and social cohesion. But superior material standards may be denied to a community willing to work to the utmost on a bare living wage and to produce to the utmost for the attainment of those standards in the most exemplary effort of self-help. Natural resources may offer nothing worth producing. Charity dries up in the long run; and, in hard times like these, in the short run. The rift between social and economic advancement cannot be permanent. Time will eliminate such anomalies as an incident recorded from Kenya not long

ago. A European resident in East Africa, restored to peace-time pursuits after war service, found himself stranded with a European companion by the roadside unable to detect the fault which had brought the motor-vehicle in which they were travelling to a standstill. Looking up from the open bonnet of the vehicle after a long period of scrutiny, he caught sight of a solitary Masai warrior carrying a spear and bedecked in the trappings of savage Africa, who was watching proceedings with apparent interest. His impatience having found expression in forcible English unflattering to the onlooker, he was astonished when the Masai approached and with ironical politeness offered highly competent advice in more than passable English. Savage Africa makes haste to reclaim the amiable warrior-mechanic unless economic development can frustrate it by consigning spears to the scrap heap and by raising the spanner to a new place of honour.

Social welfare is in the long run inseparable from economic development. In allowing social welfare to forge ahead of economic development the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 represents a charitable gamble. It has been more decorously described by its official sponsors as an act of faith—faith in the ability of economic development to catch up and support social welfare. Public enterprise comes forward prepared to capitalise new undertakings from which private enterprise holds aloof. The official blue-print takes the place of the company prospectus. The functions of the state expand again. Preoccupations, first of social and then of economic welfare, have become the main concern of legislative bodies and their executive agents. The network of planning and co-ordinating organisations spreads wider, but the challenge of nature persists.

The features of the New Deal stand out still more clearly in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. The British taxpayer in this country is now

clearly silhouetted as paymaster for schemes of social welfare and as financier-capitalist engaged in industrial and commercial enterprise in the Dependent Empire. The Act provides a sum of £120,000,000 for expenditure over a period of ten years, rather more than £50,000,000 being earmarked for Africa ; about £15,000,000 for the West Indies ; about £8,000,000 for the Eastern dependencies ; and nearly £25,000,000 for central schemes, including more than £8,000,000 for research. Yet £120,000,000 to serve all the needs of the dependent Empire in both welfare and development represents no very revolutionary New Deal. There is wisdom in modesty. The monies provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 were spent mainly on welfare as distinct from economic development.

The demand was obvious enough. A recent official print, reviewing health conditions, uses familiar language in a passage such as the following :

“ To appreciate the magnitude of the task of raising the standard of health . . . it is necessary to bear in mind the backward condition of many of the inhabitants (of the Dependent Empire) and the unfriendliness of the environment. Many African tribes still lead a primitive life and in many dependencies illiteracy and great poverty are still widespread. In vast areas the apparatus of the modern state is still in its most elementary form and men and women are engaged bare-handed in a struggle for survival against wild animals, pestilence, drought, flood and all the other forces of untamed nature. Many diseases are peculiar to the tropics and the early pioneers had to fill wide gaps in medical knowledge before measures could be devised to deal with these diseases. But even when the cause and cure of a disease has been clearly demonstrated in the laboratory, obstacles of a kind unfamiliar in the civilised world may stand in the way of the practical application of knowledge. In some areas the witch doctor still holds sway and even where new ideas have made progress ancient superstitions and immemorial practices still offer keen rivalry to European medicine.”

The document goes on to admit that many dependencies are still only at the beginning both in the prevention

and in the cure of disease ; that reports of medical departments still contain appalling stories of community-wide disease ; that both in rural and urban areas the standards of public and private hygiene are lamentably low and the facilities for proper sanitation lamentably deficient. All this is common knowledge. But much that is written of the present condition of the Dependent Empire, not only in respect of hygiene, but of education and social welfare generally, might have been written of this country less than a century ago. At the same time there is one notable difference. In the Dependent Empire there is lacking, not only the finance and the organising ability, but the will to promote social welfare on any scale through institutions independent of the state. In communities which for the most part are too loosely knit for any conscious identity of social aim, voluntary co-operation is lacking. The benefits, and in particular the money-saving advantages of collective organisation, are difficult to come by. Material resources and human ability are not easily pooled. If the circumstances of most of the dependent peoples are a challenge to the social sciences, they are a still more serious challenge to realistic calculations of finance.

It is significant that the enactment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 was accompanied by an official warning to the governments of the various dependencies that social welfare must stand on economic foundations, for without economic development (to quote the document conveying the warning) it will be impossible for the dependencies to maintain from their own resources the improved standards which are desired for them. Impossible to maintain, let alone to provide. . . . The warning is a timely one. In other words, economic development must be stepped up. But by what means ? If it is admitted that hitherto private enterprise has fallen short of the achievement which might satisfy the custodians of the welfare of dependent peoples, how is

additional wealth to be created? In a debate on development in the Dependent Empire an eminent member of the Conservative Party twitted his opponents by asking what guarantee there was that under schemes launched by public enterprise the dependent peoples would escape the exploitation to which they were exposed by the operations of the monster of private enterprise. A more obstinate question is whether the angel of public enterprise is likely to succeed when embarking on schemes unsought and unthought of by private enterprise. Remunerative enterprise has no agreed limits. Its outer edges are fluid. Its expansion or contraction is influenced by a whole complex of variable factors. But physical conditions and environment exercise their permanent restraints. The substitution of public for private enterprise, or rather the supplementation of the latter by the former—for the sponsors of public enterprise are true Britons in their sense of compromise and accommodation and their distaste for ideological conflicts—can no more add to the natural resources of the Dependent Empire than a man can by taking thought add one cubit to his stature. Such obvious truisms may be momentarily overlooked in the spectacle of industrial councils, development boards and departments of commerce and industry which are now being assembled in solemn array through the length and breadth of the Dependent Empire. A certain colonial governor was wont to show exasperation at the existence under his administration of a functionary known as the Director of Electricity, a title in the gubernatorial view appropriate only to Almighty God. A caveat against superhuman omnipotence should attach to the ready avowals of national spokesmen of their responsibility for the improvement of material standards in the Dependent Empire. For improvement is conditioned in the last resort by the natural resources of the territory, apart from many other factors over which any single state has only a very imperfect control. As many authorities have

pointed out in a phrase which has gained a wide currency, it is no longer enough for the state "to hold the ring" while private enterprise, without encouragement or impediment, applies or withholds its energies, as the case may be. But from the economic fatalism inherent in *laissez-faire* there is a danger of too rapid a transition to the other extreme of belief—a belief in creative economic evolution through the will of the state.

The immediate task of the state is now more simply described. "Priming the pump" is a phrase which has been widely used in recent official pronouncements about the function of public capital in schemes of economic development in the Dependent Empire. "The money contributed from United Kingdom funds," so a high authority declared to the public in this country, "is in fact a priming of the pump. It is a contribution towards the permanent raising of the economic resources of the dependencies and will, we hope, lead to a permanent improvement in their possibilities of financing their own expenditure at levels which the social conscience of the modern world demands." It behoves the home taxpayer, who must foot the bill, as well as the colonial nationalist, to reflect on the magnitude of the national undertaking involved in the process of priming the pump. It denotes a change, which is certainly radical if not positively revolutionary, in the use to which the taxpayers' money must be put. Experience has accustomed the taxpayer to the heavy cost of the many public services which come within the orbit of the modern state to satisfy the demands of the social conscience. But these are services paid for out of an established national income. It is a very different matter when the taxpayer is offered the horrors, or the thrills, of seeing the money which he contributes applied to speculative enterprise. Yet such is roughly the situation which arises in handling the money which he contributes to the Dependent Empire through the fund set up by the Colonial Development and Welfare



Act. There is no guarantee that the pump, once primed, will then continue to work on its own strength. The pump-primers are rolling up their sleeves ; or rather they are doing the equivalent by forming committees and issuing reports. In Jamaica, as elsewhere, a body was recently set up to survey the economic prospects. There is a revealing passage in the report which it issued. "If private capital," says the report, "whether local or external is unwilling to take the risk of investing in some particular field there is quite a possibility, on the face of it, that government would lose some or all of its money." The verdict which followed this almost naively worded conclusion was that private enterprise and not the state should undertake the risks of economic development. Of course ! Let private capital build up national wealth and let the state see to it that the national income is distributed in accordance with social justice. But if private capital holds back ? Then only the state, armed with funds contributed by the taxpayer in this country, can step into the breach. The angel of public enterprise must step in where the monster of private enterprise fears to tread. The angel will not rush in with the reckless haste of folly. He will move in circumspectly, but with the courageous determination of a resolute gambler. He has no option. If he holds back, all hope fades for the Dependent Empire to attain to the material standards which "the conscience of the modern world demands." Economic development would then stand adjourned *sine die*.

Britain has assumed no light commitment on behalf of the Dependent Empire in undertaking national responsibility for economic development. It is sometimes said of private enterprise, both in defence of it and in disparagement, that it seldom fails to find some knight errant ready to tilt a lance in any tournament, however hazardous ; or, in cruder parlance, that some fool will always be found to put money into any concern, however dud. It is not surprising that the financial orthodoxy of the

Jamaica pump-primers should have been shocked at the notion of the state embarking on risks from which private enterprise might shrink. Elsewhere the new responsibilities of the state are not only recognised but readily exploited. In Mauritius, for example, the state is expected to take the major risks of industrial expansion. Some years ago an industry was set up for the manufacture of bags, in which to pack sugar, out of locally grown aloë-fibre. After the establishment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund the interests concerned applied for capital from the fund for the expansion of the industry with the object of making Mauritius self-supporting and independent of India in supplies of bags for its sugar. Business men, not unnaturally, were disposed to hold back from financing an undertaking of which an unfavourable view might be taken by so formidable a power in the industrial world as the Calcutta jute manufacturers. The application for assistance from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund was met at the outset with no official enthusiasm. Indeed all the resources of official procrastination were employed to frustrate it. Representatives of the applicants failed to elicit any explanation from official spokesmen until they fortuitously discovered that their project was frowned on as likely to be prejudicial to fibre-growing interests in another part of the Dependent Empire, namely Tanganyika. They had let the matter drop when suddenly, to their bewilderment, it was taken up in official quarters with every evidence of enthusiastic support. The fluctuations in the official view of a project of the kind are significant testimony to uncertainties which must beset much of the enterprise on which the state must now embark. And apart from undertaking business risks formerly considered entirely inappropriate to public enterprise, the state is now being pressed, in the absence of free competition, into a position of having to adjudicate between conflicting claims to economic development in different parts of the Dependent Empire.

The task is not one of planning for plenty out of plenty, but for plenty out of poverty. In one respect the state can attack this task with a definite advantage over private enterprise. Human life being short, the individual investor seeks a return within measurable distance on the money which he lays out. The state, on the other hand, has an unlimited expectation of life. It is more able to wait for results. Within the limits of its resources (which are no more than the collective resources of the community) it can clear the ground by means of development schemes too onerous or too risky for private enterprise to undertake in the hope that the work of clearance will be followed by profitable enterprise in some form. In an unstable world such work is inevitably attended with serious risks, even with the wisest and most prescient planning. Persons familiar with the meticulous financial regulations in which administrations in the Dependent Empire have been straitjacketed so as to eliminate any risk of a dependency being able to spend from its own revenues a single penny which it cannot afford, will relish the contrast between the elaborate precautions designed to protect the home taxpayer from any call on his pocket in the routine transactions of government overseas and the open-handed spending of the home taxpayer's money through the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Side by side with the New Deal for the Dependent Empire the old tradition still subsists. The annual budgets of the dependencies still comprise an elaborately detailed catalogue of expenditure not only for the scrutiny of local legislatures, but for the ultimate scrutiny and control of the Secretary of State for the Colonies after microscopic examination in Whitehall. The catalogue can hardly be varied by one iota without the Secretary of State's authority. No doubt political developments are now relaxing the rigours of a centralised financial control which not infrequently led to administrative absurdities. About twenty years ago, for example, a member of

the Survey Department in a certain tropical African dependency, having found it convenient to use his bicycle on official duty and having asked the government which employed him to bear the cost of the annual tax of 2s., payable under local statute on all bicycles, the Governor found it necessary, before complying with the request, to write a full-dress official despatch to the Secretary of State explaining the circumstances and seeking authority to disburse 2s. from the public exchequer for a service not provided for in the annual budget. An officer of the secretariat staff who offered to contribute the sum from his pocket rather than be put to the trouble of drafting the official despatch was rebuked for such irregular frivolity.

Such were official preoccupations in days when the state was content to "hold the ring" for private enterprise; when trained in the rubric of cautious parsimony it stood correctly neutral to all respectable entrants into the ring but consistently on the alert for costly failures, to the occasional disgruntlement of some concession hunter whose schemes looked likely to leave the state with the legacy of a worthless public utility or saddle it with the duty of financial salvage on behalf of some batch of settlers left penniless in the blue.

The wheel was indeed turned full circle. Neither is the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 the last of the measures comprised in the New Deal for the Dependent Empire. A subsequent Act of Parliament has set up a Colonial Development Corporation with borrowing powers up to a total of £100,000,000. The Corporation has power "to establish or assist any enterprise (in the Dependent Empire) designed to increase general productive capacity." It is described as a trading concern working on a commercial basis, but under state control. It may itself undertake enterprise; it may do so through a subsidiary corporation; or it may come to the help of enterprise already in existence. It is a trading concern, anxious to advertise the fact that its behaviour conforms

to hard-headed business principles. Its aim is to undertake projects which will at least be sufficiently remunerative to repay its borrowings. Like the old colonial loans for the construction of railways and similar public undertakings it provides a gilt-edged investment, open to public subscribers. Its operations thus differ from those of private enterprise in that the profits of its shareholders are limited. If surpluses accumulate they can be applied to further economic development. If losses are incurred, they must be made good by the taxpayer. It is another variety of state enterprise, supplementing or supplanting private enterprise. But it is anxious to rely on private enterprise for the managerial skill and experience required for the successful conduct of its operations and which private enterprise can clearly supply more readily than officialdom. It thus reflects wartime experience and recalls the partnership between Whitehall and the City in the operation of the great supply departments. This is exemplified in its first project which is one of ambitious proportions. Unilever's subsidiary, the United Africa Company,<sup>1</sup> one of the most powerful corporations with interests in the dependent Empire, whose activities in West Africa have already been mentioned, has undertaken to work a scheme for the production, under the auspices of the Colonial Development Corporation, of ground-nuts over an area in East Africa, the greater part of which lies in Tanganyika, of about three and a quarter millions of acres. The ultimate possession of this vast undertaking is left unsettled. It can be assumed that it will ultimately be transferred in some form to the governments of the dependencies in which it is situated. Time and circumstance must decide. Whether such a scheme would have commended itself to private enterprise may be doubted, if only on account of its magnitude and the large amount of capital required. In any event the concession to a private corporation of rights over so large

<sup>1</sup> The ground-nuts scheme is now operated by the Overseas Food Corporation.

an area on African soil, even in a remote and sparsely populated area, would have been liable to attack as inconsistent with the protection of African rights in the land, though the same security of tenure is needed and the same degree of displacement of Africans is involved whether the undertaking is run by public or by private enterprise. The operation of the scheme by public enterprise at least guarantees the retention of surplus profits, after payment of a fixed rate of interest and repayment of borrowings, for further economic development in East Africa. Investors have no chance of taking out dividends to the tune of eighty per cent., like the shareholders in Ashanti goldfields in West Africa in the pre-war period. This is at least a partial answer both to the African critic who in a public debate in London, conducted under the auspices of a well-known society, rose to his feet to ask what benefit the natives of Africa stood to gain from a scheme in which the government of this country held the controlling interest and the United Africa Company held the remaining interest. It is also at least a partial answer to the critics of a different mind, more numerous on the continent of Europe than in this country, who proclaim that backward tribes cannot be allowed to withhold great tracts of land from producing food needed by a starving world, oblivious of the fact that elsewhere in the world there is abundance of land ready for production of which full use is not made.

The scheme stands or falls as part of a plan to meet the present world shortage of vegetable oils and fats. The immediate reason for launching the scheme is the urgent need for new supplies of oils and fats for this country in particular. The official White Paper describing the scheme, ends with these words : " In arriving at their decision [*i.e.* to launch the scheme] His Majesty's Government have been greatly influenced by the obligations which they assumed by their acceptance in 1943 of the resolutions embodied in the Final Act of the Hot Springs

Conference and by their active participation in the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. His Majesty's Government are convinced that, in present conditions, this responsibility can best be discharged by taking early action to increase the world's food supplies. If this large-scale experiment succeeds, it may well prove to be an important step towards the Food and Agriculture Organisation's goal of a world free from want."

In contrast with the sonorous pontifications of official scribes, a charming glimpse of the scheme in its beginnings is given by a talented writer drawing on first-hand knowledge :

"To visit the ground-nut camp at Kongwa is a fascinating experience. Cities of canvas have sprung up in the wilds, jeeps jolt along tracks cut through dense bush, trains puff cautiously over temporary bridges, directors drop from the skies and leave again to dine the next night in London and machinery is converging from all parts of the globe on this bustling patch of Africa. . . . The groundnutters foresee new towns and garden cities in what was once the barren bush, populated by well-paid African mechanics and office workers and their families, who will work their eight-hour day all the year round, send their children to progressive schools and join subscription libraries and social clubs."<sup>1</sup>

There is nevertheless a warning against too great expectations in some prosaic statistics. The scheme is estimated to call for a capital outlay of more than £25,000,000 and, when cultivation is in full swing, to provide permanent employment for about 30,000 Africans. Only 30,000. . . . The limitations inherent in plantation development are again apparent. Something almost identical might have been witnessed in West Africa under the auspices of the United Africa Company operating as an independent private concern. The Colonial Development Corporation, as an agency of the New Deal, is following the old agricultural trail blazed by private enterprise. It portends no great industrial innovation.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Huxley. See *United Empire* (Journal of the Royal Empire Society), 1947 series.

There is much argument whether the schemes of the Colonial Development Corporation can be brought to fruition in face of the dislocations and distractions of the post-war world. Attention is drawn to the lack of capital equipment for land development and to the lack of incentive goods to secure the co-operation of the dependent peoples in the schemes propounded. There is certainly no indication that any of the undeveloped parts of the Dependent Empire are capable of easy conversion into areas of cheap-food production. But the success of the New Deal in all its activities depends first and foremost on the will and the capacity of the dependent peoples to take advantage of such opportunities as the New Deal offers for material self-improvement, and on the conviction that material self-improvement is worth the effort of mind and body without which it is unattainable. In tropical Africa, for example, the practitioners of the New Deal are offering, both by precept and example, opportunities to the African to remedy inveterate habits of inefficient cultivation which in many places now threaten positive disaster. In every society the forces of enterprise and enlightenment find pupils both apt and inapt. Recently a group of African chiefs, no doubt judiciously selected, on a visit to this country under the auspices of the British Council could have been observed taking an exemplary interest in the organisation and activities of local government bodies in this country in the course of a tour in the west of England. The avidity with which the visitors studied the location of sewers or the operation of traffic-lights was admirable. Almost simultaneously a Member of Parliament, returning from a visit to a certain part of British tropical Africa, where he had been specially interested to study progress in the art of local government, was making no secret of his disappointment to find that an important native authority had so little understood the rudiments of the business, that the appearance on the agenda of a meeting which he



had attended of the question of regulations dealing with the slaughter of animals had only led to an interminable argument between two worthies interested in stock dealing as to the equivalent value of local bullocks in terms of local goats.

Many of the dependent peoples have shown a tenacious hold on life through centuries of warfare, famine and disease. Enlightenment may prevail over lassitude and conservatism. But of all the hostile forces at work the most dangerous is suspicion. Colonial nationalism, suspicious of exploitation and increasingly resentful of tutelage, will be quick to detect motives of exclusive self-interest in Britain's performance under the New Deal. At the same time the fact must be squarely faced that in applying the principles of the New Deal, on which the emphasis is placed on the welfare of the dependent peoples, Britain cannot ignore considerations of self-interest. Her national wealth is no longer so abundant that she can indulge in exhibitions of national quixotism. She can no longer afford to subsidise economic development in the Dependent Empire without substantial material benefits in return. This condition rules out the use of the New Deal as an instrument for establishing industrial or commercial enterprise in the Dependent Empire such as would threaten established interests in this country or in the self-governing parts of the British Commonwealth. It must also be remembered that there is now a national obligation to accommodate the interests of the United States. Quite clearly the New Deal is no *deus ex machina* equipped to perform rapid miracles of economic transformation in tropical Africa or in other parts of the Dependent Empire. Neither in scope nor methods does it differ very greatly from other forms of enterprise which have preceded it. But it has focussed attention on the Dependent Empire and created a widely informed public interest in an important department of imperial relations which no longer admits of neglect or lends itself to perfunctory and facile expedients.

## CHAPTER V

### POLITICAL AIMS AND INSTITUTIONS

THE government of this country has declared its determination not only to promote the material welfare of the Dependent Empire, but to lead its peoples to full self-government within the British Commonwealth. Full self-government normally implies that the dependencies are to become responsible for the management of their affairs, both domestic and external, without interference from this country. It implies, on the face of it, a withdrawal of authority over the Dependent Empire as complete as the withdrawal of authority over India. The only reservation is the retention of the new self-governing units within the British Commonwealth. They are not given the right to secede, as Burma has seceded. There is, of course, no "target date" for the grant of self-government to the dependencies, either individually or collectively. In the archives of the Colonial Office there is a file on a subject of concern to Uganda on which the official then holding the rank of Permanent Under Secretary of State was moved to write, some ten years ago, that he looked forward to the day when the Governor of Uganda would be an African. In the light of present professions of policy his successor to-day might write that he looked forward to the time when an African Prime Minister would be head of the administration in Uganda, while in matters of mutual concern His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Government in Uganda maintained contact through the offices of High Commissioners in London and Entebbe, with an African High Commissioner presiding over Uganda House somewhere in the heart of London and adorning the official society of the capital of the British Commonwealth.

If the first reaction to the notion of self-government for the Dependent Empire is one of complete incredulity, it is a very understandable reaction. Political realism may well feel affronted. But the aim of full self-government has already been re-defined. Official documents and pronouncements are now careful to insert the qualifying word "internal" between "full" and "self-government." This is a timely after-thought. There are obviously certain aspects of government in which, under modern conditions, it would be quite impossible for small scattered and economically weak units such as the great majority of the dependencies to enjoy the reality of independence, whatever its outward forms. Lack of industrial resources, trained man-power and a substantial national income would prevent any single unit of the Dependent Empire from providing for its own defence—to take one obvious limitation. The ingredients of sovereign power are entirely lacking. Intelligent colonial nationalists, whatever their public declarations, do not expect complete independence in external affairs. They do not wish to leave the shelter of the big British umbrella or to face the cold rain of an unfriendly world. Mr. Bustamente, for example, knows well enough that he would be less likely than His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Washington to negotiate a satisfactory agreement for the admission into the United States of Jamaicans seeking employment there. Mr. Uriah Butler, the crippled champion of the rights of labour in Trinidad, knows equally well that at an international conference to regulate the world output of sugar in producer countries he would be less likely to secure a good quota for Trinidad than the chosen delegate of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom negotiating collectively for Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados, Mauritius and the rest of the smaller sugar-growing countries of the British Commonwealth. Conversely, the government of this country cannot afford to surrender control of the strategic resources of any part of the

Dependent Empire, if only for the drab, but compelling, reason that any part of it might be vital to national safety. "Not an inch to be given away." Such was the condition of appointment which Mr. Winston Churchill is credibly reported to have conveyed to one of the statesmen whom he selected for office in his War Cabinet as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Gambia, it is pertinent to note, is a small British enclave in French Africa which by all the rules of geography and economics should belong to the French Empire (or Union). Had it not been under British control during the war, air communications vital to British, and ultimately to French, national interests would have been seriously imperilled. "What we have we hold." It is as well that this sentiment was still strong in British statesmen fifteen years ago when they were at pains to emphasise the burdens rather than the benefits of Empire for the edification of Adolf Hitler and his associates, who commented a little sourly on the lack of alacrity shown by the British in preparing to unburden themselves. It has now come to be recognised that the demands of British national insurance, *no more than the economic weakness and vulnerability of the dependencies, need not* be a fatal impediment to full internal self-government in the Dependent Empire. Recent events in Ceylon have established a timely precedent. Complete self-government has been conceded in domestic affairs ; in defence and external affairs control has been reserved by the imperial authorities. Dyarchy is the word which has been coined to describe this division of powers between two separate authorities. Dyarchy is likely to be in evidence in the future development of the political institutions of the Dependent Empire.

To future generations looking back on the nineteenth century the projection of Europe over the rest of the world will appear as one of the outstanding achievements of the century. The spread of European influence and control was only possible through the political subordination of

the non-European world. It could not have been accomplished if European ideas of political liberty had been regarded as applicable outside Europe and exported for general consumption. While Europe at home was yielding to the creed of political liberty, European mastery overseas was being established on principles of "enlightened despotism" carried over from an earlier century. The time-lag is now being caught up. European ideas of political liberty are now being asserted in the non-European world. This is one of the most compelling reasons, if only one of them, for the fullest measure of self-government which it is possible to apply in the Dependent Empire. Political liberty has various associations. For colonial nationalism it has two in particular. In the first place, it means what is generally known as "home rule"; that is, government without the arbitrament or interference of an outside or alien authority enforcing its will through alien agents. The idea of "home rule" is the emotional dynamic of colonial nationalism. In India it found characteristic expression in a famous utterance by Gandhi nearly thirty years ago when he said that the government of Afghanistan was a bad government, but that the Afghans were to be envied by the peoples of India because the Afghans at least governed themselves. There are innumerable *clichés* reflecting the same idea. It has often been said that fifth-rate self-government, or self-government at an even lower rating, is preferable to first-rate government by aliens. The right of peoples to misgovern themselves is readily conceded, at least by disinterested spectators. Even the superiority of anarchy over efficient government by aliens has been claimed. Indian nationalists, amongst others, have been heard to claim it in the past, asserting their right to settle their differences by civil war, if necessary, and quoting in support of this alleged right respectable precedents from the history of our own country. More sober calculators, especially if able to avoid the more irksome attentions of alien rulers on their native soil, may

set a less extreme value on this particular form of political freedom. There are always and everywhere the quislings, content to come to terms with alien rule so long as it protects their special interests. Others have discovered that alien rule may respect individual liberty. Indeed, bureaucratic and autocratic governments have often been more respectful of individual liberty than ostensibly democratic governments. They have seldom invaded the privacy of the citizen to demand that such and such a volume shall no longer stand on the bookshelf or that such and such a picture shall no longer hang from the wall. But colonial nationalism has a special anti-alien, or rather anti-European, complex. The racial and other antipathies and antagonisms which make so many peoples of the Dependent Empire so often look on so many of their own compatriots as aliens, or at least as different from themselves, do not prevent them from uniting in self-assertion against an alien authority rooted in this country. Colonial nationalism has been described as negative and unconstructive. The propriety of the description is doubtful. Fundamentally, colonial nationalism is racial. It is a revulsion varying in degree of intensity in different varieties of non-whites and strongest in those in closest contact with whites, against white domination, and in the Dependent Empire domination by the United Kingdom. It has all the virulence of an inferiority complex. In the Dependent Empire political subordination has not been mitigated by the flattering admiration which in the course of history so many military conquerors have bestowed on the conquered possessors of an equal or superior culture, like the Macedonian and Roman conquerors of Greece and many of the barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire. The dependent peoples, on the other hand, have been treated as inferiors in all the arts and sciences, and as only doubtfully worthy of tuition. Even the more lucrative rewards of servility have been denied to them. Few among them have been able to rise to positions of affluence or

influence, like Greeks or Armenians in the service of masters like the Ottoman Turks. They have missed the consolation of military distinction. Until the recent war very few of them had won conspicuous laurels on the field of battle. The fighting qualities of some little-known tribes of tropical Africa might have been familiar to a select few. But the Dependent Empire boasts no regimental names, like that of the Gurkhas, which a generation ago might have attracted the composer of a patriotic song for the music halls and moved club-bound colonels to sentimental reminiscence.

The acute neurosis of colonial nationalism is beginning to reveal itself in the search for a mythology. In tropical Africa the native press gropes for threads with which to weave legends of past African greatness. But African nationalism is unlikely to discover memories like those with which Curzon sought to appease Indian nationalism in 1901 when, on a conspicuous public occasion, he pointed out how India was already the home of great empires when Englishmen were still savages and how India more than any country in the world had influenced the history, the philosophy and the religion of mankind. In the eastern hemisphere, colonial nationalism has recently been reinvigorated by the earlier successes of Japan at the expense of European Powers during the war, and later by Asian participation in Japan's final defeat. African participation in the defeat of both Italy and Japan has also given an impetus to colonial nationalism in tropical Africa. In tropical Africa its temperature is running high. In the riots in the Gold Coast in the spring of 1948 competent observers were impressed by the violence of anti-alien sentiment.

"Home rule" is the first ingredient of political liberty as understood in the Dependent Empire, at least in all the internal functions of government. "Home rule" does not, of course, contain as a matter of necessity the other ingredients of political liberty. It may lead to the

early appearance of a form of government which is a complete negation of all the freedoms of the Atlantic Charter and of other freedoms as well. It may lead to the police state or to some other sinister perversion of popular government. It may lead to some variety of despotism, ancient or modern. *Optimi corruptio pessima*.<sup>1</sup> But home rule will at least begin on approved models. In the Dependent Empire the nationalism which asserts its claim to home rule as a challenge to white superiority, claims home rule on the basis of those political institutions on which Britain prides herself. It will be satisfied with nothing less than parliamentary democracy on the British model. The self-esteem of the non-whites will insist on the opportunity of demonstrating their ability to make a success of parliamentary self-government ; of proving by their performance that their political capacity is equal to that of their present masters ; of confounding the sceptics who have doubted the quality of the lesser breeds without the law. The same sceptics predict that with the advent of self-government colonial nationalism will lose its dynamism ; that it will succumb to the internal weaknesses and dissensions of the dependent peoples, which the removal of external control will intensify. These weaknesses, on the other hand, may serve to put colonial nationalism on its mettle as never before.

The challenge to colonial nationalism is certainly calculated to provoke a keen response. Anthropologists have been at pains to point out that there is no scientific basis for the pretensions of any particular race to superiority in the human family on the grounds of racial make-up. For practical purposes it is immaterial whether the differences in human achievement are due to circumstance or to basic endowment. The special political sagacity on which the British, as a people, pride themselves may be due to good fortune alone. The point is that the British do claim a special degree of political sagacity with

<sup>1</sup> "Nothing so bad as the best when it goes wrong."



which they do not credit the dependent peoples. This sagacity, in the popular mind, is exemplified in the success of parliamentary self-government in this country and in the self-governing parts of the Commonwealth peopled mainly by people of white British stock. Sometimes the success is attributed to the natural growth of the British constitution as contrasted with the artificial or ready-made character of political institutions elsewhere. In any event, of all forms of government, parliamentary democracy makes the strongest appeal to national vanity. It implies a belief such as that which fortified the Fathers of the American constitution, in the ability, the integrity and the patriotism of the common citizen ; a conviction that things go best when they are directed by the standards of the ordinary man, because the ordinary man is shrewd and honest even if he cannot always be well-informed, and above all, in a British community, because he is well-balanced, endowed with the qualities of discipline and self-restraint to abide by the law, to repudiate the appeal to violence and to refrain from the abuse of power. It is through lack of the moral qualities associated with the successful British practice of parliamentary self-government that the sceptics expect the dependent peoples to fail, and judge them unfit for home rule. Abraham Lincoln believed in popular self-government because it is impossible to fool all the people all the time. Karl Marx believed, or professed to believe, in the innate good sense of the proletariat. But British self-congratulation on the success of parliamentary self-government on the British model is due to pride in collective good temper at least as much as to pride in collective intelligence. And it is the moral qualifications for self-government which have been doubted in the dependent peoples. It is not only that poverty, ignorance and disease are rife in many parts of the Dependent Empire. The moral stamina of the dependent peoples is suspect. A Victorian reformer as radically minded as Morley declared, forty years ago,

that democracy could not be transferred east of Suez. A wider meaning is implied in this geographical expression. East of Suez can be interpreted as including tropical Africa, the West Indies and the Mediterranean as well. Hence the filip which the promise of self-government gives to the sensitive self-esteem of colonial nationalism. Hence the eager sense of a chance of self-vindication aroused by the present emphasis on Britain's intention to lead the dependent peoples to self-government. It is felt that the liquidation of the present system of Crown Colony government has begun in earnest.

Crown Colony government is essentially a perpetuation of subordinate status rather than an introduction to self-government. It is a somewhat entertaining political curiosity. On the legislative side it has all the forms of parliamentary government without the vital substance. It maintains the fiction or the semblance of local sovereignty for each dependency. When a legislative measure is enacted for Trinidad, or Sierra Leone or Fiji, for example, the measure is embodied in an Act or Ordinance introduced into the local legislature and passed, according to the prescribed formula, "with the advice and consent" of that body. But the local legislature, generally known as the Legislative Council, is not a free agent like Parliament in this country although its proceedings are conducted with all the ritual of parliamentary process borrowed from Westminster, and often in impressive surroundings. In many capitals of the Dependent Empire there are handsome council chambers in stately buildings. In some of them the members sit at massive tables under ceilings supporting heavy chandeliers beneath the gaze of the illustrious dead whose portraits in heavy gilt frames hang from the walls. Proceedings may be opened with prayers and a mace may be placed on the presidential table. Until recently, at any rate, it was customary for the Governor in some dependencies to take his seat in the presidential chair attired on all occasions in a morning-

coat—no mean sartorial affliction in a tropical climate. But the solemnity of these proceedings belies their significance—a situation fully appreciated some twenty-five years ago in a particular dependency where formal meetings of the legislature were dispensed with altogether, the votes of unofficial members on the various items of the parliamentary agenda being recorded on a printed slip circulated to them as they sat in shirt sleeves (at least in the hot season) in their business premises. The composition of a legislative council in the Dependent Empire at once demonstrates how deeply it differs in essentials from a sovereign body like the House of Commons. It is a “blended chamber,” combining in its membership both public officials and unofficial local citizens, either nominated by the Crown or elected on some system of local franchise. The unofficial members may outnumber the official. A majority of unofficial seats has recently become the rule rather than the exception. But effective power still remains on the official side of the legislature, which votes *en bloc* under the Governor’s directions; for even if the officials are out-voted the Governor is able to invoke special powers to override an adverse majority vote. The power to initiate measures also rests with the Governor. The powers of the unofficial members are thus limited to suggestion, criticism or obstruction. Nor have they any control over the civil service. The executive departments of government are under the sole direction of the Governor and responsible to him alone.

Crown Colony government originated, of course, before the era of rapid communications, first by the steamship, then by the submarine telegraph and finally by radio-telegraphy and telephony. A hundred years ago months might elapse while the imperial authorities were unaware of what was going on in some part of the Dependent Empire, and months might elapse while a Colonial Governor was without instructions from home. In such circumstances it was a natural precaution against

any serious aberration of policy to admit representatives of local interests to official deliberations, at least for a hearing. In India the Mutiny gave point to this precautionary adjunct to bureaucratic government, having demonstrated the unwisdom, in the words of an eminent contemporary administrator,<sup>1</sup> of legislating "for millions of people with few means of knowing except by rebellion whether the laws suit them or not." Legislation in many of the individual units of the Dependent Empire concerns thousands rather than millions, and its annals are little disfigured by rebellion. And in an era of rapid communications the association of local representatives in the deliberations of government in the dependencies has come to serve different ends.

It is a curious paradox that it now impedes rather than promotes one of the main purposes of Crown Colony government. This is the decentralisation of imperial control. So long as Parliament in this country is responsible for the Dependent Empire, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom must retain a general control over the affairs of the dependencies. This control is exercised through the Department of State entrusted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to whom the Governor of each dependency is responsible and who, in his turn, is responsible (with his other ministerial colleagues) to Parliament. In practice, Parliament intervenes only in so far as the exigencies and hazards of national interests or party politics bring the affairs of any part of the Dependent Empire into the arena of parliamentary discussion. As a general rule the Dependent Empire, because of its remoteness from matters of immediate concern to the electorate in this country, brings little grist to the political mill; so little that its affairs are sometimes claimed to lie outside the orbit of party politics. In any case Parliament cannot exercise any close or detailed control over the Dependent Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Bartle Frere.

In recent times, control of the Dependent Empire has thus come to be exercised by proxy ; that is, by the permanent staff of the appropriate Department of State. The Colonial Office has come to "run" the Dependent Empire, but with an eye all the time on the political weather-cock and sensitive all the time to the winds that blow round the parliamentary arena. The Dependent Empire has thus had the worst of two worlds. It has neither been governed by an authority "on the spot," seated within the territory of each dependency, nor yet by a distant bureaucracy with a strong sense of initiative and enterprise and capable of applying a consistent policy. The permanent staff of the Colonial Office cannot lay down policy without risk of transgressing constitutional limitations. On the other hand, close ministerial direction is difficult to achieve. Like Parliament, the Secretary of State for the Colonies is overburdened ; but more so as he carries the burden of office as well. He is a leading member of a political party and of the government of the day ; he is immersed in all the political issues of national importance which demand the attention of the cabinet of which he is a member ; and the duration of his tenure of office in the department concerned with the affairs of the Dependent Empire is determined by the vicissitudes of the political situation. At the longest he is not likely to be at the Colonial Office for long. As the Dependent Empire, as a general rule, provides comparatively little material for enhancing the reputation of a statesman or the credit of his party with the electorate, the zeal of successive Secretaries of State and the range of their knowledge of the affairs of the Dependent Empire are a striking testimonial to their public spirit. It is a far cry now from the time when the great Lord Palmerston, finding none of his colleagues disposed to accept the portfolio of the Colonial Office, concluded that he might as well take it on himself in addition to his other duties, and asked the appropriate permanent official to conduct

him upstairs and show him where the damned places were on the map.

From time to time voices are raised to plead for a freer hand for the "man on the spot" in the name of efficiency and common sense. "The way to get results is to trust the man on the spot. Choose a first-rate man, of course, and then leave things to him until he makes a mistake. And if he does, sack him." Such is the advice offered. Unfortunately it is incompatible with the practical working of parliamentary democracy. A private corporation with branches overseas might be happy to apply the method advised. Private corporations have criteria by which mistakes can be surely and swiftly judged. In public affairs it is otherwise. On most issues of importance opinion is divided; as recently, for example, on the question in Malaya whether political organisations professing communism should be suppressed in the interests of public order or tolerated in the interests of political liberty. The caprices, uncertainties and procrastinations of which complaint is raised in the Dependent Empire cannot be avoided by any important delegation of authority so long as responsibility for its government lies with Parliament in this country. The only way of escape lies in self-government for the Dependent Empire.

It was well over two thousand years ago that the jibe was made in ancient Athens that a democracy is incapable of governing an Empire. British parliamentary democracy is certainly incapable of legislating for more than thirty colonial dependencies or even of giving more than a fitful direction to their general policy. Indeed parliamentary democracy is hard put to it to preserve its essential character and at the same time cope with the enormous mass of public business which has to be handled by a large-scale national state.

In so far as the Dependent Empire is concerned, parliamentary government has in practice come to mean

bureaucratic government, but bureaucratic government inhibited by a sense of constitutional subordination and so careful to follow the tramlines of established precedent and practice. The lack of sustained public interest, having kept the Dependent Empire in the background of parliamentary discussion except at rare intervals, has encouraged the growth of a settled departmental outlook and habit. Until recently a single tradition has prevailed. This is a tradition of rigid parsimony enforced by a system of meticulous financial control. It has a highly respectable antiquity. When reformers a hundred years ago began to challenge the propriety of public expenditure on the army, the Church, the court, and even the navy, it is not surprising that the idea of an empire on the cheap gained strength. The solvency of each and every dependency (which is, of course, a very different thing from their economic strength) became the main preoccupation of the Colonial Office. Over the Colonial Office fell the forbidding shadow of the Treasury. The watch-dogs of Whitehall have served the British taxpayer well. The domestic government of Britain's Dependent Empire has been cheaply run ; but in the process both initiative and political growth in it have been stifled. Crown Colony government, beneath its imposing façade, has had no chance of attaining the reality of popular parliamentary government. Financial control has been applied in deadly detail, and as there is no administrative process which does not involve finance, detailed financial control is equivalent to detailed control in all aspects of government. For many decades official shelves and desks throughout the Dependent Empire have been adorned by a well-thumbed print entitled *The Colonial Regulations*. This print, issued by the Colonial Office, has been a fateful document for the Dependent Empire ; as fateful as another official manual, *The King's Regulations*, has been for the British Army. The form and procedure prescribed for the annual budgets of the Dependent Empire is a master-

piece in the art of tailoring financial straitjackets. Expenditure "votes" consist of a formidable array of minutely detailed items of expenditure, all of them subject to detailed scrutiny in Whitehall and, once scrutinised and authorised, invariable without the sanction of Whitehall in any particular, however trivial. Not content that the governments of the dependencies should keep expenditure in the aggregate within the limits of income, the watch-dogs of Whitehall insist on a degree of detailed control to which no local government body in this country could conceivably be subjected by a superior authority. Such stringent regimentation inevitably leads to a heavy two-way traffic between the Dependent Empire and Whitehall in a literature of stardling orders and regulations about minor details of domestic administration, such as the scale of out-of-pocket expenses repayable to a foreman of works for a couple of nights away from headquarters, allowances for depreciation of private cars, of various makes and horse-power, used by officials on duty, or the maximum weight of personal baggage carried free on a government railway when a head of a department or some of the smaller fry take leave. The interference of Whitehall in such *minutiae* seems hardly defensible, even when there are special reasons for precautions as when the credit of the imperial exchequer has been pledged to guarantee public loans floated for some major undertaking in a dependency, or for the rehabilitation of some community whose staple industry has been devastated by a hurricane or some other calamity beyond human control.

Bureaucratic anxiety to keep clear from parliamentary criticism, or in the event of criticism to be amply armed to meet it, is not the only reason for the regimentation of the governments of the Dependent Empire, even if it is the root cause of it. Regimentation has been reinforced by a subtle form of official snobbery. The permanent officials of Whitehall have for generations felt a sense of superiority



over the officials serving overseas. The administrative grades in Whitehall have been recruited from the *fleur fine* of the intellectual youth of the country, through the competitive examination based on written papers which has governed entry into the Home and Indian Civil Services. Very few of the officials serving in the Dependent Empire could compare with those of the Colonial Office in academic attainment. Even the former *élite*, consisting of entrants into administrative posts in Malaya, Ceylon and Hong-Kong was drawn from the "also rans" of the Home and Indian Civil Service examination. Now that there is less difference in the intellectual calibre and academic performance of the men who sit in the Colonial Office and those who serve overseas, apart from a change in the political atmosphere, a sense of mutual respect and confidence is replacing the old snobbery. Like most forms of snobbery it was met with counter-snobbery. If the mandarins of Whitehall felt a certain contempt for a "prancing proconsul" whose despatches might be blemished by a slovenly or ambiguous sentence or even by a split infinitive, the proconsul's subordinates, if not the proconsul himself, would be ready with retaliatory jibes at the expense of hair-splitting casuists out of touch with practical realities whose knowledge of the world was circumscribed by a daily journey from some suburb to Downing Street and back again.

Small wonder if, in such circumstances, an air of unreality has surrounded the pompous parliamentary antics of the shadow-legislatures of the Dependent Empire in which the result of any proposal is a foregone conclusion, at the behest of a distant authority, unless the unofficial members can raise some altogether new point, which has not occurred to the official policy-makers and which carries sufficient weight to get judgment suspended while further instructions are sought from London. Otherwise the limit of unofficial achievement is to drive a reluctant Governor to make use of emergency expedients to enforce,

not his will, but the will of his principals. The government of a dependency does not, and cannot, behave like a responsible parliamentary government. It cannot be driven by defeat to resignation. Its mandate does not derive from any local source but from a distant imperial authority. But time has brought its revenges. The Dependent Empire has learnt how to thrust its affairs into the political arena at Westminster and to claim a share in the direct attention of an overworked Parliament. Precious parliamentary time is now allotted, on occasion, for a specific debate on major issues of policy in the Dependent Empire. The artifices of Crown Colony government have not diverted the political leaders of the dependent peoples from access to the *fons et origo* of imperial policy. It has come to be realised that if policy is to be influenced, influence must be brought to bear on the real policy-makers behind the scenes, far away in London. Hence under modern conditions of communication and with the mechanism of British democracy what it is to-day, the centre of political gravity has shifted away from the forum of the local legislature to the metropolitan nerve-centre of the Dependent Empire. A premium has been put on long-distance lobbying and on wire-pulling. The support of pressure groups is sought in favour of this or that cause. The petition, the delegation, the appeal to the society for the promotion of this or for the suppression of that, the search for ammunition to put into the hands of snipers ready to shoot at the home government, the collection of material for the awkward question in the House of Commons, have become the stock-in-trade of colonial politics. By now representative government, such as it is in the Dependent Empire, has evolved into representation by proxy in Parliament at Westminster, through a miscellany of agencies including special departments or organisations, concerned with the affairs of the dependencies, which have grown round the principal political parties in this country. This process is pointedly

described, in its inner workings, in a periodical <sup>1</sup> published by the Colonial Fabian Bureau, a well-known organisation associated with the Labour Party. "The Bureau," so writes its secretary, "has had to cope with the day-to-day problems which have been coming to its notice in increasing volume and urgency." A cable would suddenly arrive—for example, from Jamaica—saying "Five trade-unionists detained. Two trade-unions banned. Please help." Or, say, from the Gambia, "Mass protest meeting against new press regulations. Please make representations to Colonial Office." Or friends in Mauritius would wire, "May-day celebrations prohibited." And so forth. The sequel is not necessarily the formal question in the House of Commons or any other action reflected in parliamentary proceedings. Far more probably such proceedings are forestalled by proceedings of a different character behind closed doors, where, in the quietude of a Department of State, a circular is drafted for despatch to the governments of the Dependent Empire in which Governors are admonished that the time now seems ripe for them to consider the desirability of introducing legislation to amend the existing law governing the status of trade-unions in this particular; or the law governing the press or the rights of public assembly in that particular. The case will most probably be argued on general grounds, without any hint of the circumstances in which it originated, in a document which is a masterpiece of dignified English composition. Without the hubbub of parliamentary debate or public discussion, fresh legislation is thus added to the Statute Book throughout the Dependent Empire. New principles of government thus pass into law. The will of the British people is interpreted and applied without overt expression. So long as Parliament is responsible for the Dependent Empire it is all to the good that the affairs of the dependencies should be brought at least within ear-shot of

<sup>1</sup> *Fabian Quarterly*, April 1944.

Westminster. But how much more invigorating for constructive political life in the Dependent Empire if its domestic concerns could be fought out and settled by the exertions of local stalwarts in a local arena under the eye of a local public ! And how much valuable time would be saved and administrative nuisance avoided ! Representations from the Dependent Empire to London may be reasonable or unreasonable, honest or fraudulent. Their merit can seldom be assessed without much inquiry. The wires begin to hum ; " working parties " are mobilised ; harassed scribes settle down to compile yet more memoranda. Urgent business is held up while evidence is collected and sifted and voluminous briefs are prepared. Early in the war the Governor of a certain dependency was faced with the hold-up of some measures of vital urgency owing to official inquiries inspired by a private letter to an uncle from the nephew of a very eminent political personage. Such are the tribulations of imperial responsibility for a Dependent Empire. But it may be better that many precious man-hours should be squandered in routing out a mare's nest than that one single individual's complaint should pass uninvestigated.

Such is the inevitable backwash of Crown Colony government. But the criticism most commonly directed against it is on the score of the very limited character of the franchise in dependencies in which unofficial members are elected to the local legislature, either entirely or in addition to nominated members. Recent changes have greatly extended the electorate in many parts of the Dependent Empire so that it is no longer restricted, as formerly, to the wealthier members of the community. But under Crown Colony government the nature of the electorate is not of great moment. There are few, if any, dependencies in which the reactions of all sections of the community to any measure cannot be gauged in advance with complete confidence and accuracy. The electoral system is certainly without value for purposes of political

training. No candidate for election can stand as the sponsor of any positive programme. The Governor alone, under direction from the Colonial Office, has power to introduce measures, to raise money by taxation and to spend it. At the best a candidate for election can only take a negative line, undertaking to oppose some suspected measure or series of measures. Not unnaturally candidates rely for success on more personal considerations ; on a reputation, for instance, for ability to cajole or intimidate the official administration, particularly in matters of official patronage which always loom large in the Dependent Empire. Thus questions of personalities rather than of policy come to dominate and to vitiate local politics, and continue to divert attention and effort from the task of organising political parties on national lines in anticipation of genuine self-government.

On the face of it there is merit at least in a system which provides for the consultation of local interests before any measure is put into force. It might be assumed that, amongst other advantages, such a system would provide a useful parliamentary training for local political leaders. Certainly many of them are far from deficient in forensic ability. To some of them it would not be unfair to apply a rather harsh judgment once passed by Lord Balfour on the political class in India. "They have shown," he wrote, "all the qualities of contrivance and ingenuity of parliamentary obstruction and all the smaller arts which hang about the practice of free institutions ; but what they have not shown is that fundamental desire to make the government of their country work, without which free institutions are not only perfectly useless but may be absolutely dangerous. Their ingenuity is wholly destructive." Whatever the circumstances of India, political institutions in the Dependent Empire have never been free under Crown Colony government. There is a whole world of difference between the official consultation of unofficial opinion and unofficial responsibility for

making the government work. The unofficial members of the legislative councils have no responsibility. Herein lies the main defect of Crown Colony government. It provides no genuine political training because it has tended to become, quite inevitably, a forum, not of constructive political action, but of expostulation, of protest, of demonstration. Opposition for the sake of opposition has become common form. For this very reason the Legislative Council has lost most of the value which it was originally intended to have as a sounding-board. When criticism is irresponsible, involving the critic in no danger of being left with the exacting burden of office, of having in fact "to make the government of the country work," a sense of discrimination is quickly lost. The critic finds himself free from all but self-imposed restraints. It is not surprising if colonial nationalism, in its resentment against subordination to an external authority, has found in the Legislative Council a platform on which to indulge its rancours and its vanities to a chorus of easily-won applause. In some dependencies on particular occasions, and in some on almost all occasions, identification with a government measure becomes the hall-mark of the colonial quisling ; protest, the hall-mark of the colonial patriot. A regular and safely entrenched opposition has little incentive to give the administration good advice.

Another common, if less serious, blemish of Crown Colony government is the frequency of personal attacks of a virulent kind on public officials, particularly on public officials appointed from outside the dependency. This is unfortunate but understandable. In small communities, such as those of which the majority of the dependencies are composed, a senior public officer is a very conspicuous person ; 'much more conspicuous than any but the best-known or most striking-looking of Cabinet Ministers could ever be in this country. A senior official on appointment to a small dependency need feel no incredulity if he

is warned on good local authority, as many have been, that his every gesture will be watched and commented on. The warning may, or may not, make him yearn for the anonymity of less parochial surroundings. His personality, in local eyes, will be a permanent reminder of subordination driven home in those day-to-day acts of administrative routine which in small communities are also more conspicuous and more severely judged than any legislative enactment. The public official is the agent of an alien authority, whether his manner is tactful or tactless, his demeanour sympathetic or unsympathetic. Neither in practice nor in theory, as in this country, is the public official the obedient servant of the local citizen. Etiquette demands that he shall so describe himself when he corresponds officially with any local addressee. But his responsibility is to the Governor, who is the chief representative of an external authority. Attacks on public officials are an inevitable concomitant of Crown Colony government. It is noteworthy that personal attacks on public officials have been a marked feature of political behaviour in Kenya, where most of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council are of the same race as the official and not, as a rule, of very different social antecedents. In some of the smaller dependencies the unpopularity of the imported official is exacerbated by the resulting exclusion of locally-born competitors from some post of good emoluments and public distinction. But the root of the matter is political resentment. Even Colonial Governors, in spite of the prestige which attaches to their persons as representatives of the Crown and to their power over individuals as heads of the administration, have not always been immune from scurrilous attacks. More commonly the objects of attack are the heads of the principal departments, when recruited from outside sources and so looked on as interlopers from every local angle. The most serious consequence is the sometimes demoralising effect which such attacks have on the

discipline of local subordinates who see their chiefs held up to ridicule or contempt. Officials under attack, unable to retaliate, can only stand on their dignity, as all officials must do, particularly in alien surroundings in which they are a distinctive and conspicuous minority. The attacks will continue until internal self-government becomes a reality in the Dependent Empire and the civil service becomes answerable to a local, and not to an alien, arbiter. The victims tend to take cover either in a somewhat irritating attitude of proud humility or in a contemptuous indifference, either genuine or simulated.

A person even more deserving of sympathy is the local politician, who has little chance of showing his worth or developing his capacity as a constructive and responsible political leader. The limit of his achievement is that of a good debater and committee man. Crown Colony government cannot serve as a training-ground in the art of responsible self-government. Like the art of flute-playing which, as Aristotle observed, can only be learnt by playing the flute, the art of government can only be learnt by the process of governing. In our own country responsible self-government came about by revolutionary, if non-violent, changes. The professed intention may be to lead the dependent peoples to self-government. But the lead can only be given in the generalised form of making them healthier, wealthier and wiser. In a strictly political sense there can be no gradual approach, step by step, here a little and there a little. At a given moment a more or less abrupt break must be made with the past. The time has gone by when a gradual approach might have been achieved through usage, and only then in circumstances more favourable than those surrounding the great majority of the dependencies. If the imperial authorities had found it possible to give Colonial Governors a far freer hand and to leave Legislative Councils to their own devices, then Crown Colony government through habit and usage



might have tacitly become an effective instrument of self-government. Nevertheless there are a few units of the Dependent Empire in which a large measure of effective local self-government has been achieved by usage. In Bermuda, Barbados and Bahamas, three of the survivors of the first British Empire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there is the reality of parliamentary self-government as contrasted in the mimicry of it in other parts of the Dependent Empire. In the islands mentioned the Colonial Parliaments, as they are proudly styled, are genuine parliaments. Their composition is admittedly of a more orthodox parliamentary type than that of the Legislative Councils under Crown Colony government with their blend of official and unofficial members. There is no official representation in the lower house of the Parliaments of Bermuda, Barbados and Bahamas ; and although their enactments are subject to constitutional restraints within the power of the imperial government, these restraints have seldom been exercised in practice. Thus parliamentary self-government has been largely established through usage. It is more likely to be challenged from within than from without by the majorities which are excluded from the electorate under an antiquated and highly restricted system of parliamentary franchise. So long as the Legislative Councils in the Dependent Empire, generally, lack the substance of self-government, a narrow parliamentary franchise, as has been observed, is of little moment. But in the loyal and ancient colonies of Bermuda, Barbados and Bahamas the character of the franchise is a vital political issue because, in practice, the local parliament is the real arbiter of policy and also has come to enjoy a large measure of control over the executive departments of government. " They govern ; we look on." So a Governor of Bermuda not many years ago remarked with a wave of the hand in the direction of the building in which the Colonial Parliament was sitting, as he drove through the streets of the capital of Bermuda

pointing out the sights to a V.I.P. from Washington of a politically inquisitive turn of mind.

Yet the situation is equivocal, as recent events in Bermuda have shown. A controversy has arisen which may disturb comfortable acquiescence in established usage. A group purporting to represent the majority of the inhabitants who are still excluded from the electorate has protested to His Majesty's Government in this country against their political disabilities. His Majesty's Government, sympathising with the protest, hopes that the Colonial Parliament will be moved to measures of reform. The Colonial Parliament may be so moved. On the other hand, it may resist both popular clamour and imperial pressure, claiming that so long as under its government the colony is financially self-supporting, neither seeking nor accepting aid from the imperial exchequer, there should be no interference in its domestic arrangements. It will be interesting to see whether the unenfranchised Bermudians can enlist enough political support in this country to induce His Majesty's Government to use its dormant constitutional powers to interfere in the domestic affairs of Bermuda, should the Colonial Parliament remain obstinate.

In other parts of the Dependent Empire there are doubtless groups which, under certain conditions, have entertained, and still entertain, vague hopes of seeing Crown Colony government develop into a variety of local self-government through the practice of non-interference on the part of the imperial authorities. These groups and their sympathisers see clearly enough that under such conditions, so long as they are in a majority on the Legislative Council and can find Governors either pliant and accommodating to their interests, or, if unaccommodating, unsupported by Whitehall, they would soon be ruling the local roast. Such a development, silent and unobtrusive, would suit their book far better than any specific constitutional change which would be publicly

discussed and would be certain to stir into action the champions of political equality. There are such groups in the areas of white settlement in East Africa. They represent plantation development. In Kenya they stand for self-government for what they describe as a characteristically British colony. In point of fact Kenya is, in many ways, unique and bears little resemblance to any British colony, old or new. Self-government, of course, means government by the European minority. This minority has a far from flimsy case to put forward. It pays as little lip service to equalitarian principles as the ruling oligarchies of Bermuda or Bahamas. It frankly repudiates the notion that democracy is the best form of government for a country like Northern Rhodesia, as well as Kenya, where, as one of its spokesmen<sup>1</sup> sarcastically observes, "there are 18,000 whites, some quite intelligent and the majority more or less educated, and 1,800,000 native Africans of whom at least ninety-nine per cent. are incapable of taking part in any government except perhaps at village level." The argument concludes that at a time when economic exigencies call for the organisation of large-scale enterprise, a system of government is required which is capable of a sound and flexible long-term policy not subject to frequent change and interference from Whitehall according to the vagaries of political pressure in this country. There are many sides to the argument. The white minorities of Kenya or Northern Rhodesia may be as qualified as the white oligarchies of Bermuda and Bahamas to be political judges in their own cause and to be the political keepers of their unenfranchised, because backward, brethren. What is certain is that political influences in this country will see to it that they get no chance of demonstrating their fitness for a racial monopoly of self-government.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel C. Ponsonby. Letter to *The Times*, 31st March 1948.

## CHAPTER VI

### POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

THE practicability of internal self-government depends, in the first instance, on the ability of the self-governing unit to achieve stability in public finance. This, as has already been pointed out, is an altogether different matter from general economic stability. If the dependencies have to wait for economic stability before they can be allowed self-government, then self-government stands adjourned until the Greek Kalends. It can be no more than some far-off, divine event towards which there is no perceptible advance. Within the normal functions of government for all domestic purposes, and excluding external matters such as defence, solvency is the condition of independence. "Political responsibility goes ill with financial dependence." So said an eminent member of the Conservative Party <sup>1</sup> when he held office as Secretary of State for the Colonies. But too often the simple fact is obscured that solvency is the essence of financial independence and that solvency depends, not on quantity or quality of material resources, but on successful housekeeping. It is to-day within the compass of any and every dependency. This has been abundantly demonstrated by the behaviour of the imperial authorities under Crown Colony government for a hundred years and more. They have consistently seen to it that each dependency should live within its means, making its standards, however austere, conform to its income ; at least until the recent advent of the "New Deal." Internal self-government might be granted to a very large number of dependencies

<sup>1</sup> Col. Oliver Stanley.

without further delay if sound public finance were the vital consideration.

The economic weakness of the Dependent Empire gives rise to an interesting paradox. While it puts full autonomy in all aspects and functions of government beyond reach, it is not without advantages for internal self-government. It weakens the temptation to the government of a Colonial Power to exercise control in the interests of home-born nationals, for the simple reason that such interests will not be established on a large enough scale to exert serious political influence. It is noteworthy that hostile critics of British performance in India as a general rule fasten on three motives of self-interest as having prolonged British rule; firstly, the desire to sell goods in a market where others did not enjoy an equal opportunity; secondly, the desire to enjoy preference in investment and concession privileges; and thirdly, the desire to get on the pay-roll or, in other words, preferential opportunities for congenial and lucrative employment. In the Dependent Empire such considerations have not the same force. In it British pecuniary interests do not stand high in the hierarchy of national assets. Trade with the Dependent Empire represented no more than about eight per cent. of this country's total overseas trade in both directions in the period just before the war. In the same period this country's investments in the Dependent Empire represented much the same proportion in relation to overseas investments in the aggregate. In effect, Britain's pecuniary interests in the Dependent Empire are insignificant as compared, for instance, with the high-powered and concentrated interests owning or operating industrial undertakings for the production of some commodity vital to national strength in countries like Iran and Iraq.

The Dependent Empire has not experienced any serious visitation of the tougher forms of "economic imperialism" in which all powerful states indulge in a greater or lesser

degree and the more fortunate ones without recourse to the cruder methods of political coercion because (like ourselves a century ago and the Americans to-day) they can achieve their ends by more respectable methods. The Dependent Empire has been too poor. Its peoples are now being told, in many official and unofficial homilies, that political advancement and material prosperity are inseparable. Through wealth, or at least through its uses, lies the road to freedom, both for individuals and for peoples. This is the natural language of economic man in "acquisitive society." Moral forces are no longer invoked in a facile belief that they can operate in a material vacuum. Self-determination, the rights of people to dispose of their own destinies, and the slogans which were current after the first war are now qualified by a rider about self-sufficiency. Material strength is the surest condition of political freedom. This is only a truism. But it is a truism which is not worth repeating to the dependent peoples. Individually they are woefully weak, with few exceptions. For them freedom through strength is no more than a remote ideal, though admittedly one to be pursued by all possible means, such as closer union in the West Indies or the amalgamation of certain African territories now separate. But their material weakness removes major inducements to interference in their domestic affairs. They can enjoy the protection of the British Commonwealth and also (sooner or later) a large measure of political freedom. Such is the British yoke. And the fun of it—and strictly logical fun at that—is that new temptations to interfere in the domestic arrangements of the Dependent Empire may be expected from the New Deal which has as its avowed object the promotion of material prosperity through schemes of economic development. The government of this country will have a new interest in keeping at least a finger in the government pie in territories where the private concession hunter is replaced by public corporations operating under the

authority of an Act of Parliament in Westminster to produce fats or rice or whatever it may be to feed the households of this country or to pass on for sale in foreign markets.

In the earlier part of the nineteenth century official patronage played an important part in national calculations of the value of colonial dependencies. In society as it was then constituted a good government appointment was much sought after as a source of income. Organised overseas services, notably the Indian Civil Service with its honourable tradition and its ample storehouse of handsome rewards, have had a by no means negligible influence on national life. Overseas service in a public capacity has done much to prolong the existence of an intermediate class, now rapidly disappearing, which consists of families with social pretensions and prestige in excess of established financial resources. During the last quarter of a century the colonial service has largely taken the place of the Indian Civil Service in attraction and popularity. Its reputation now stands high ; and the fact must be accepted that self-government in the Dependent Empire will involve its liquidation just as self-government in India has involved the liquidation of the Indian Civil Service. But long before the liquidation of the Indian Civil Service, the "Indianisation" of that service was steadily progressing. The "colonialisation" of the colonial service is already in progress, in anticipation of self-government in the Dependent Empire ; and one of the most criticised features of colonial patronage has also disappeared. The highest appointments, such as colonial governorships, have for many years ceased to be regarded as consolation prizes, as well as convenient cloakrooms, for misfits in politics or the fighting services. To represent the colonial service as a vested interest capable of retarding self-government in the Dependent Empire would have about as much or as little force as to represent the application of English law as a deterrent

to non-British commercial enterprise. A change in the political status of the Dependent Empire is not likely to have much effect on conditions of employment in private enterprise. The quantity, quality and source of recruitment of persons engaged in commerce, plantation development or other industrial activity will obviously continue to depend primarily on economic conditions and not on the political status of the territory concerned. An exaggerated emphasis is put on the risks to established interests which the advent of self-government in the Dependent Empire would involve. The more provocative outbursts of colonial nationalism are much to blame. In its revulsion against white domination, colonial nationalism has tended to borrow from the ideological vocabulary of socialism, or even of communism. The manner of economic development in parts of the Dependent Empire has injected nationalism with socialism. Extraneous holdings in various forms of enterprise come under political fire more readily when there are no corresponding local holdings which a substantial propertied class of local origin is concerned to defend. The state also appears as the only local agency in the least capable of financing enterprise. The elimination of capitalist enterprise, or rather of the conduct of enterprise by any agency other than the state, have come to be confused with political freedom and national independence. In one dependency in which the whole economy pivots on plantation development for the production and export of sugar, a leading citizen declared on a public occasion, with more accuracy than discretion, that the sugar industry was the life-blood of the community, providing the most ragged beggar in the streets with his livelihood no less than the wealthiest planter or broker. "Then nationalise the industry and we'll have no more beggars." So came the quick retort. But whether nationalised or otherwise, the stability of the sugar industry remains the inescapable aim of the particular community. Internal self-government cannot



be allowed to become an instrument for the disruption of the economy of a dependency. The more hair-raising utterances of colonial nationalists need not be taken too seriously. Economic suicide is not a course which is likely to appeal to them or to anybody in the Dependent Empire. And in its comparative economic simplicity the greater part of the Dependent Empire has one great advantage over a highly complex modern state. In a country like our own, for example, the responsibilities of citizenship are almost desperately exacting. The amount of more or less specialised knowledge required for a reasonably informed judgment on many vital issues of national policy is enough to appal any conscientious voter. When parliamentary reformers wish to deprive the City of London of special representation in the House of Commons, the advocates of political equality at all costs may rejoice at the prospect of a more disinterested parliamentary approach to the complexities of international commerce and finance. But impartiality gains at the expense of knowledge. Such are the tribulations of democracy in a highly complicated community. On the other hand, in at least two-thirds of the Dependent Empire the units awaiting self-government are small in size and their economic organisation is simple enough to be fairly comprehensible to the whole community. A glance at the map is in itself reassuring. The little red dots on the map of the world, scattered both east and west, with the thin red line beneath minute lettering which denotes the name of some island territory no bigger than Surrey or the county of Monmouth, do not suggest a bewildered local public lost in the labyrinthine mazes of high politics and high finance. In short, the simplicity of their economic organisation gives many of the dependencies a double advantage. It not only sets important national issues in proper perspective and makes them comprehensible, but it throws into sharper relief the consequences of national policy. The fruits of political

wisdom or folly are more obvious and more immediate. There is therefore a chance of timely self-correction, which is denied to the governments of more intricate and more powerful states with reserves of strength or credit to sustain them in their unwisdom.

In the minds of many experienced observers the threat to successful self-government in the Dependent Empire lies not so much in political ineptitude as in shoddy performance on a more pedestrian level. Whatever the principles professed by the government of the day, taxes have to be collected, the police force has to be made to do its work, the courts must be organised so as to clear their business, the children must be got to school, and so forth. It is efficiency in the hum-drum business of day-to-day administration and in the more technical and less political aspects of government that is doubted. Such misgivings constitute another challenge to the *amour-propre* of colonial nationalism. They arise not so much from British pride in the superior intelligence of their public men as from pride in their superior moral qualities, and concurrently from denial of those same qualities to others. Dark-skinned Ministers of State with the morals of a nineteenth-century pasha, scheming Levantines, crafty and obsequious *babus*—in such company colonial nationalists feel themselves to be classified in a different moral atmosphere from that which surrounds the incorruptible British administrator. They also know that their capacity for practical good sense is suspect ; and that in the British mind political performance is largely judged by the quality of the administrative machine ; that decent standards of public hygiene, for example, and a judiciary that commands respect are accounted of far greater weight than any abstract principles by which legislation may be inspired. More than a few of the present generation in this country can remember (though they may not relish a reminder) being moved to encomium of the achievements in the inter-war period of dictators like Ataturk, Mussolini and Hitler by experiences

no loftier than the spectacle of civil behaviour in a customs official, the punctual arrival of trains or perfection of traffic control. Similarly, more than a century ago when Byron and other apostles of romantic liberalism championed the cause of Greek liberation, they could appeal not only to memories of the glory that was Greece cherished by an upper class nurtured in the classics, but also to British abhorrence of the administrative inefficiency which was the outstanding feature of Turkish misrule.

More than a hundred years ago British statesmen were boggling at the idea of popular self-government for colonies in which the population was a white population. Their language sounds old-fashioned to modern ears, but their ideas are still widely expressed in discussion of the political institutions of the Dependent Empire. "Popular assemblies," wrote one of them, "have been productive of much ruinous consequences where the elements of society are too different to permit of a similar constitution with that of the Mother Country. An Assembly will unavoidably introduce a question which cannot fail to generate the seeds of lasting fermentation in a country composed of such combustible materials." An earlier colonial statesman had written in almost identical language. "*If two bodies and classes of men differing in their prejudices, and perhaps in their interests, were to be consolidated in one legislative body, discussions and animosities might too probably prevail, and the success of either party might, in fact, be injurious to the other.*" Later generations have learnt to be less timorous. They are familiar with legislative bodies bearing the heavy burden of *responsible government* which embrace classes of men by no means identical in their prejudices and interests—Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Gallacher, for example. They have become more hardened to the prevalence of discussions and animosities and to the success of one party to the injury of the other. But the same warning note is

sounded as was sounded a hundred and fifty years ago when the subject of self-government for the Dependent Empire was broached. It is easy to translate it into modern idiom. If majority government is applied to the Dependent Empire, what about the protection of minorities? This is a pre-occupation of engrossing concern. And not only, if mainly, to the representatives of capitalist and proprietary interests who cannot hope to constitute a numerical superiority and are naturally apprehensive of "class legislation" directed against them—as if legislation had not always been inspired by some group interest so as to be unpalatable to some extent to some other group. But there also the most stubborn of old-fashioned imperialists, the moral imperialists who, without any semblance of cant, protest that Britain cannot divert herself of responsibility for holding the balance between conflicting interests in the Dependent Empire for the sake of social justice. It is impossible to have it both ways; to concede self-government to the Dependent Empire and to immunise it from the abuses to which every form of government is liable all the world over. As General Smuts trenchantly observed in an indignant outburst when the racial behaviour of his white compatriots was called into account before an international tribunal by critics whose own record in such matters was by no means unblemished, there is no community in which there is no discrimination against any minority, whether racial or non-racial. But there is consolation in the thought that if the worst came to the worst in some unit of the Commonwealth which had newly been granted self-government, the resumption of control by Britain would be far from impracticable. Such a situation is not unprecedented. In recent years when Newfoundland, a self-governing unit of the Commonwealth of long standing, found itself in serious difficulties, the imperial authorities intervened on terms which were readily agreed. The responsibility of which Britain cannot divert herself is the responsibility for measures of

financial or social salvage in the event of self-government proving a failure. But even in the event of half a dozen such failures the strain of measures of rehabilitation would be trivial compared with the cost to this country in treasure, let alone in blood, involved in the discharge of Britain's duty as mandatory power in Palestine over a dreary waste of years. It is perhaps unfortunate that risks have to be taken in the Dependent Empire at a time when national resources are already overstrained. But from the financial angle the collapse of one of the lesser units of the Commonwealth would resemble the failure in private enterprise of the "little man" rather than the spectacular *débâcle* of a Bottomley, a Stavisky, or a Kreuger.

It is inevitable that the wisdom of transforming the political institutions of the Dependent Empire into "little Westminster" should be challenged. "Little Westminster" is a good polemical expression,<sup>1</sup> with a nicely satirical note in it. But it is just because the great majority of the dependencies provide the framework of Westminster that are little rather than big that parliamentary government will at least be a physical fit. It has already been hinted that the mechanism of parliamentary government is hardly equal to the strain of coping with the volume of public business in a large-scale state. A great many dependencies are only splinter states. The description applies to every British dependency across the Atlantic, to the three Mediterranean dependencies of Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, and to the island dependencies in other seas. There are at least twenty of these splinter states in which the central administration at national level is only on the scale of a fair-sized municipality. While this has had the disadvantage of preventing the growth of political sense and experience through local government bodies at subordinate levels, it has the very real advantage of presenting political issues in simple terms and in bringing public

<sup>1</sup> Used by Mr. R. R. Stokes, M.P.

business within manageable dimensions for parliamentary purposes. The Mother of Parliaments groaning under an intolerable burden may come to rejoice in the sight of her infant daughters, the little Westminster scattered over the two hemispheres, with the knowledge that these children need never outgrow their strength.

At least the physical structure of the community is suitable for parliamentary government in the smaller units of the Dependent Empire. There is no apparent reason why conditions should be more favourable for this form of government in five, ten, or fifteen years hence except in so far as imperial charity can improve the general efficiency of the community by expenditure on social services. But no radical change in political aptitude is likely to be brought about either by internal developments or the impact of external forces. The peoples of the smaller dependencies, whatever their racial diversities, have a sense of national identity, or at least of national cohesion. This is one of the results of the insularity of the most of them and the isolation of all of them. For some of them time and fate may ordain a merger in some larger political unit. None of them can be split into still smaller units. Already, if ever, they are ripe for self-government. Their ability to make a success of it is a question which must be left to the judgment of political tipsters who have the benefit of no public form to guide them in their predictions. For these competitors have yet to be tried out. There is not even a political stud-book which the sages might consult in the absence of any demonstrated form on which to rely. Breeding is little of a clue to political performance. The collective behaviour of Germans in the United States has borne little resemblance to the collective behaviour of Germans in Germany ; while a wider survey of human history reveals that not even when circumstances were favourable could either of the peoples to whom humanity owes the heritage of Athens and of Jerusalem make a success of self-government.

Tropical Africa presents a very different picture.

“ The policy of eventual self-government for Africa is not new : what is new is the tendency in Whitehall to rush it and to prefer political slogans to hard facts, to substitute complexity for simplicity. There is no merit in appointing Africans to the Legislative Councils, or to senior posts in the service, unless they are fitted : there is positive danger in sending a trade unionist to an African Protectorate—or anywhere—unless the people are ready ; strong meat is bad for children. I fear there is a tendency nowadays at home to listen too readily to the vociferous politically-minded few, who represent no one so much as themselves, and to forget our duty to the inarticulate mass of the population who depend on us for their safety and happiness and to whom we are in a real sense trustees. I am sure that this is not in accordance with the advice of the man on the spot, than whom the African has no better friend.”

Thus speaks the wisdom of the ancients, in the words of a former Governor<sup>1</sup> of African territories. Alas, that human frailty is such that there are very few, either vociferous and politically minded or the reverse, of whom it cannot be said that they represent no one so much as themselves. But the quotation comes as a significant, if unintended, commentary on an ugly outburst of mob violence and mass hysteria in the Gold Coast, where the politically minded are perhaps more numerous than in any other African dependency. Nevertheless, even if those who preside in Whitehall may force the pace, the objective still lies far ahead. Before power can be shared, constitutional plans must be laid for an all-round share-out. Responsible parliamentary self-government can only be introduced when the method of popular representation has been settled. It implies some system of joint representation in a single electorate for the election of a common parliament. There is, of course, no sentiment of common citizenship between the various peoples of territories like Nigeria or the Gold Coast, Tanganyika or Kenya. No common political institutions hold them together, but only the authority of Britain, which enfolds them in a single administration. This has been no impediment to effective

<sup>1</sup> Sir Shenton Thomas. (Letter to *The Times*, 10th April 1948.)

government at the centre so long as the general direction of policy and the ultimate control of the administration is exercised by a superior alien authority. But power can only be transferred, in Tanganyika for instance, to a locally constituted government responsible to the peoples of Tanganyika for the government of the whole of the territory if they can all combine, by some appropriate means, to form such a government and to run it. In the territories of British tropical Africa any such political combination is new. Without it self-government would only mean a mushroom growth of small self-governing units, many of them woefully small and weak, where there is now a single unit under British rule. This would be a disaster in an age in which the tides are running out against small states. It would be a serious setback to the British territories of both East and West Africa if hinterland and seaboard were separated by new political divisions ; if services like long-distance communications were brought within the management of several distinct administrations ; and if the diseases which infest man, beast and plant without respect for man-made frontiers were not amenable to single control. Africa has nothing to lose and everything to gain by closer union between its component peoples through their political institutions as well as through other means. Fragmentation would be too high a price to pay even for self-government. To avert such a predicament much time and effort are needed. The final stage will be reached only when an agreed system of popular representation for the creation of a national parliament has been achieved in each of the continental territories of the African tropics, or better still, in larger groupings of such territories, such as a unit consisting of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika grouped together. A system of parliamentary representation by which all the inhabitants of any of the present African territories would be prepared to abide ; a common citizenship on terms agreeable to all varieties of Africans concerned, tribal



and detribalised, rural and urban, primitive and educated and not only to Africans but to immigrant or resident Europeans and Asians—such an achievement seems to resemble the dream of a political visionary. Yet it is one of the preliminary conditions of responsible self-government in the African dependencies. A great exponent <sup>1</sup> of British methods of administration in Africa is reported <sup>2</sup> to have declared shortly before his death at a ripe age that he would like to fade out for fifty years and then return to start again in the African world of his affections and achievements. It would be optimistic to predict that in the event of his reappearance fifty years hence he would find an Africa in which from the shores of Lake Chad to the Niger delta society had learnt to think of itself as Nigerian ; or that on the other side of the African continent European, Indian and African were sharing the responsibilities of self-government as good Kenyans or as good East Africans.

A benevolent administration has used the native institutions of tropical Africa as one of the instruments of British rule. This practice is generally known as indirect rule. In spite of its interest for anthropological and political research and the copious literature to which it has given rise, indirect rule is not a theory of government. It has grown up empirically. It originated in administrative necessity. Imperial parsimony in tropical Africa, as elsewhere, made revenue, and therefore European staff, so meagre that it was found impossible to administer large African territories without the employment of existing African institutions and the co-operation of African administrators. The requirements of the imperial authorities at the centre were met by methods of European supervision and guidance. Tactful and persuasive British administrators, having first intervened with all the sternness compatible with successful intervention, to discourage some

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Donald Cameron.

<sup>2</sup> By Professor W. M. MacMillan in an appreciation of Sir D. Cameron published in *The Times*.

African potentate from practices such as cutting off the hands of offenders or leaving prisoners to rot in some filthy dungeon, gradually turned to the milder arts of prevailing on the same potentate, or his successor, to convert some of his hangers-on into an organised and tolerably disciplined police force, to recondition some suitable building as a police barracks and even to equip it with latrines. Native political institutions were thus given a further lease of life, or even artificially created where none were in existence. How far these institutions are inspired by the spirit of popular government is a question which is very variously answered in relation to different parts of tropical Africa. Many of them have an aristocratic or oligarchical kind of organisation, though few, if any, can fairly be described as despotic. Hereditary rights and privileges are in evidence, though not for that reason unpopular ; and no doubt in the heart of Africa, village Hitlers confront village Hampdens. But even in principalities as highly developed as the kingdom of Buganda in Uganda, or the emirates of Northern Nigeria, kings and emirs are subject to the discretionary control of British authority in all matters of civil government. No African potentate in the dependencies of British tropical Africa has power over the lives and fortunes of his people comparable with that formerly enjoyed by rulers of some of the Native States of India.

Economic change has estranged many Africans from the political institutions of their forefathers. It has set them on the move, creating new centres of population where natives of many different tribal or regional affiliations have been thrown together and exposed to new cultural contacts. Under new influences and in new surroundings some Africans have come to look on the whole paraphernalia of councils and chiefs as antiquated and reactionary, useful only to British authority as a means of keeping Africa " primitive " and politically subordinate. In point of fact, the latest phase of accelerated planning for self-government has given native councils and chiefs a

new significance which is the very reverse of reactionary. Councils and chiefs are thought of in terms of an electoral system for the representation of Africans in the future national parliaments of the African dependencies. The members of those parliaments of the future will be drawn from pools or panels of chiefs ; and these panels are already being used in some dependencies to erect a super-structure of superior councils with wider powers and a wider radius of authority than the ordinary native councils. Chieftainship thus acquires a political importance which the chiefs themselves are not slow to recognise. It remains to be seen whether as the accredited custodians of native institutions African chiefs will be more concerned to preserve the spirit of those institutions or to manipulate them for purposes of political self-assertion. The latter seems by no means improbable. In political education the leaders of tribal Africa are being encouraged to catch up with their detribalised brethren of the towns. When newspaper reporters appeared to interview a party of four chiefs of high standing from West Africa, whose status was based on hereditary right, in the course of a chieftainly tour (to which reference has already been made<sup>1</sup>), under official chaperonage in the west of England in 1947, the reporters were surprised to encounter not four ancient and inarticulate greybeards in picturesque robes, but four shrewd and well-informed men-of-the-world, one of whom had discarded his robes in favour of grey flannel trousers and a sports coat, to the pocket of which a fountain-pen was clipped, not for ornamentation, but the entry of numerous jottings into a well-filled note-book. Such men are now being admitted in increasing numbers into the Legislative Councils of the African territories side by side with a more miscellaneous unofficial company, comprising municipal members to represent urbanised Africans outside the pale of chieftainly representation and members returned by institutions with an alien or immigrant

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, *supra*.

tincture like Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Agriculture, Chambers of Mines or Banks. In the Legislative Councils, until the advent of responsible self-government, the position of chiefs and of other unofficial members will be the same as that of unofficial members in all legislatures, under Crown Colony government. They will be given a hearing. Their function will be criticism without effective control over policy and without responsibility. It is not improbable that they will constitute the same petulant and impotent opposition as their counterpart in other parts of the Dependent Empire. This identical rôle may at least have the advantage of uniting African members of very different antecedents in a common bond of nationalism and so create political cohesion over wider areas. On the other hand, their whole position may seem in African eyes an affront to the prestige which attaches to chieftainly status and to the authority of the native institutions which they personify. If so, one consequence may well be an agitation, in which the abler and more ambitious chiefs will force the pace, for more substantial powers to be entrusted to native political organisations, as an alternative to participation in any centralised government covering some wider territorial area. Politically tropical Africa is now in flux. It provides the most exciting material for those political experiments in the conduct of which the Dependent Empire has become one of the principal laboratories. Native political organisations like the United Gold Coast Convention affirm as their aim the achievement, amongst other things, of responsible self-government within the shortest possible time. Agreement on ends is easy, but not on means, including a comprehensive system of popular representation. Chieftainly representation is a bravely constructive effort to find an appropriate substitute for the ballot-box which it seems fantastic to think of introducing into illiterate Africa ; but its success is by no means assured. Prediction is extremely hazardous. Identical forces may exert pressure in opposite directions,

or opposite forces in the same direction. As parliamentary institutions take shape the antithesis between the official agents of the imperial government and the representatives of the native peoples of Africa will be sharpened. So far the controlling force of a single British administration has hardly begun to create a sense of national unity among a few representatives of the many different peoples whom the accident of British rule has compressed into a single territorial unit for purposes of government. Parliamentary institutions of the Crown Colony type, uniting representatives of these different peoples into a permanent, because irresponsible, unofficial opposition which can at least indulge in the arts of obstruction and put the government of the whole territory on its defence, is more likely to encourage a sense of national unity. In Nigeria the Legislative Council now meets for the all-important budget session at different places in different years. The late Governor <sup>1</sup> so decided with the deliberate aim of fostering a sense of Nigerian nationhood. The spread of English amongst members of different linguistic groups in tropical Africa may promote mutual understanding and break down mutual prejudices. Alternatively, it may lead to more serious misunderstandings, exacerbate existing prejudices and create new ones. It is all "anybody's guess." Responsible self-government, being majority government, will need some party system. But not until it becomes a reality and then overnight, because under Crown Colony government there can be no parties but only a stereotyped and permanent unofficial opposition.

The method of popular representation is, of course, the crux of responsible self-government. Native political institutions in tropical Africa suggest chieftainship as the basis of a suitable method. In the smaller dependencies, or in most of them, European associations and the equalitarian temper of colonial nationalism suggest universal adult suffrage. The method of "one man (or woman)

<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Richards, now Lord Milverton.

one vote " has even been applied in Ceylon, the most recent addition to the self-governing units of the Commonwealth, and with apparent success in spite of widespread illiteracy and a community with deep racial divisions. In Malaya native institutions offer no fruitful suggestions to political planners ; for more than half the settled population of Malaya now consists of immigrants of comparatively recent arrival. Here the obvious intention to speed up the arrival of responsible self-government has made the method of popular representation a burning question. Disagreement on this issue is the last serious obstacle to the attainment of responsible self-government in domestic affairs, for in an atmosphere charged with dissension on so fundamental an issue, and in face of threats of active or passive resistance, a variety of government which more than all others derives its authority from popular consent obviously cannot be made to work. The acquiescence of the hereditary rulers of Malaya, the Sultans of the various Malay States which it is now generally agreed must be united under a form of federal government, is more or less assured. Ever since the British occupation of their realms they have surrendered the substance of power in all matters except those which concern the religion and customs of the Malays. Their power is virtually limited to a department of religious affairs, dealing with the religion of Islam. Their future benevolence was not solicited with an excess of diplomatic tact by entrusting the same post-war mission with an inquiry into their war-time behaviour as well as with the task of revising the agreements defining their constitutional status. Nor is the position of Malay rulers, with powers limited by responsible self-government in which Chinese and Indians effectively participate, subject to the recognition of Malaya as " the object of their loyalties," likely to be more palatable to them than that of rulers with their wings clipped by a British bureaucracy, particularly as the legislatures of the states of which they are the titular rulers will in

future be subordinate to a federal legislature. They may derive consolation from the assured enjoyment of substantial revenues, the externals of power, and an informal undertaking that their wishes will be consulted on questions concerning the further immigration of aliens into Malaya. Their influence is not likely to increase. A not unimportant political organisation known as the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action, which includes Malays as well as Chinese and Indians, is hostile to them. But, like many political anachronisms, they may endure, even if political power shifts over to a middle class of alien antecedents. The Chinese may despise the prizes of public office as inferior to the rewards of commerce, but this does not mean that they will be politically indifferent under self-governing institutions. On the contrary, they are organising their Chambers of Commerce for political action just as labour has organised trade unions for political action, whenever it has had the chance. Responsible self-government in Malaya is now close at hand, but there may be some delay while experiments in methods of popular representation take their course and agreement or compromise is reached between advocates of adult suffrage on the basis of political equality all round and those of other varieties of representation. Any form of differential representation is more or less arbitrary and in a changing society must be unstable, because the social importance or value of any particular set of interests or of any institution is liable to change. Neither Malaya nor any other part of the Dependent Empire stands permanently committed to the particular form of popular representation under which it sets out on its career of responsible self-government. Only the particular form on which it sets out must be settled. Both British rule in India and Crown Colony government in the Dependent Empire have produced an astonishing variety of forms of representation in the political institutions peculiar to them. The next units of the British Commonwealth to

acquire self-governing status may not all make haste to follow the example of Ceylon.

The readiness or unreadiness of any particular dependency, or of any particular part of the Dependent Empire, for responsible self-government is a subject which lends itself to much speculative and inconclusive argument. It is suggested that the application of a simple technical test might be useful. The test is the obvious existence or the obvious absence of substantial all-round agreement in any dependency as to the appropriate method of popular representation for the purpose of responsible self-government. The existence of such agreement implies at least a fair amount of internal cohesion and confidence, and makes the introduction of responsible self-government a technically practicable proposition though it provides no firm guarantee against failure. The absence of such agreement is conclusive in a practical sense, because it rules out the practicability of introducing responsible self-government. At the present time the application of the suggested test might qualify several of the smaller dependencies for internal self-government without delay. Malaya might be a doubtful starter. The African dependencies could not hope to qualify for a long time. Those with a settled European minority would almost certainly be the last to qualify—and perhaps rightly so.

Critics convinced of the folly of any rapid extension of self-government in the Dependent Empire must also take into account the risks of procrastination. The Dependent Empire is still, politically, a no-man's-land. The political institutions peculiar to western democracy, and in particular to Britain, have not taken root in it. There are different political institutions which inspire proselytising zealots in the non-white, as well as in the European, world. The dependent peoples are invited to take a look at these institutions. The Kremlin has its wares in the window and its salesmen on the road.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE PUBLIC SERVICE

BRITISH rule has provided the dependent peoples with one essential part of the equipment of a modern state ready to attempt responsible self-government. This is an appropriately organised and disciplined civil service. Self-government will, of course, bring radical changes in the personal composition of the civil service, particularly in the higher appointments and in its sources of recruitment ; but the existing civil service in its constitutional status and its internal organisation is in all respects a suitable instrument for the use of a local administration responsible to a local public.

The civil service in the Dependent Empire, or at least in the newer and larger parts of it, has undergone a great transformation in the last half-century. Its progressive changes mark three decisive and clearly distinguishable stages in the rule of law. The first stage is that during which the main preoccupation of government is that of keeping the peace. A Colonial Governor, on first appointment not many years ago to a dependency which had been distracted by acts of violence following strikes, declared that the first aim of his administration was the maintenance of law and order. This declaration, however timely, was no more than a truism.

Keeping the peace is the first aim of all organised governments because the most fundamental of all public interests is the protection of property (which is not, of course, the same thing as the protection of existing proprietary rights). In the judgment of one of the most eminent of our ancestors of the seventeenth century <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Locke.

the whole function of government could be defined as the protection of property. This was certainly the primary function of British rule as it extended to new territories in South-east Asia and in tropical Africa towards the end of the last century. The protection of property was vital to the trading interest of the nation, which was one of the mainsprings of British intervention in Malaya and in tropical Africa. The establishment of political tutelage was sometimes found necessary to prevent the exclusion of British traders by some other colonial power (as in Northern Nigeria), or to quell some rapacious ruler with predatory designs on peoples whose productive energies were a source of commercial profit to British nationals (as in the Gold Coast). More often the aim was simply to provide the internal security necessary for peaceable trade in some territory in which that task seemed beyond the resources of its native rulers.

The degree of political tutelage demanded in such circumstances produced a characteristic type of government. There was much in common in the administrative organisation not only of the different territories of tropical Africa, but in that of tropical Africa as a whole and of Malaya. In the pursuit of much the same ends much the same means, not unnaturally, were employed. Courts of justice had to be instituted, or those already in existence before the advent of British rule, and continued under British rule, had to be supervised. The accredited heads of native communities had to be made amenable to the will of the ruling power ; the country had to be adequately policed ; and a system of taxation had to be applied to provide the bare needs of organised government. The situation demanded an inspectorate of high quality, rather than any apparatus of detailed administration. This inspectorate consisted of laymen, untrained and unqualified in any professional sense and without technical competence of any kind. Its members are variously described as Political Officers, Administrative Officers or

District Officers. These, at least, are some of their better-known designations. A certain glamour still surrounds these pioneers of British rule, though their prototype in India, the member of the I.C.S., is better known to the public. Their more conspicuous achievements belong to the golden age of empire building. Government under present-day conditions leaves no place for the amateur administrator, perambulating as a general arbiter and umpire, and dispensing the wisdom of Solomon. In this country there has lately been much ado about the method of selecting candidates for admission to the higher ranks of the civil service of the United Kingdom. The qualities officially required in candidates are declared to be "brains, personality, effectiveness, judgment and integrity"—qualities which, as a commentator<sup>1</sup> in the press shrewdly observed, might commend themselves to any recruiting sergeant. The District Officer responsible for keeping the peace in the newly-acquired territories of the Dependent Empire certainly needed those qualities in a superlative degree. He has generally been allowed to enjoy them in his occasional appearances in popular literature. In less popular literature many tributes have been paid to him, although he has not escaped detractors. His epitaph may appropriately be transcribed from a contribution to the literature of the Dependent Empire from the pen of a very great administrator and authority<sup>2</sup> on empire affairs of a bygone generation :

"The District Officer comes from a class which has made and maintained the British Empire. That Britain has never lacked a superabundance of such men is in part due to our national character, in part, perhaps, to our law of primogeniture, which compels the younger son to carve out his own career. His assets are usually a public school, and probably a university education, neither of which have hitherto provided him with an appreciable amount of positive knowledge especially adapted for his work. But they have produced an English gentleman, with an almost passionate conception of fair

<sup>1</sup> Leading Article in *The Times*, 27th May 1948.

<sup>2</sup> F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, Chapter VI (published in 1922).

play, of protection of the weak, and of 'playing the game.' They have taught him personal initiative and resource, and how to command and obey. There is no danger of such men falling a prey to that subtle moral deterioration which the exercise of power over inferior races produces in men of a different type and which finds expression in cruelty. The military officer turned civilian invariably becomes an ardent champion of his protégés, and no one shows greater aversion to militarist methods than he. If occasionally some colonial officer suffers from a 'swollen head' (as a member complained in the House) and exaggerates the importance of his office, may it not be charitably ascribed to that very devotion to his work and realisation of its responsibility and magnitude which has made our Empire a success? No words of mine, after long experience, can do justice to the unselfish, conscientious work of those officers."

To modern ears the language of this testimonial may sound old-fashioned. It may describe social conditions which are out of date. It may even provoke irritation in some quarters. But an up-to-date opinion (concerning the former counterpart in India of the District Officer of the Dependent Empire) is at least illuminating for the contrast it makes between the Administrative Officer overseas under conditions which have vanished, or are rapidly vanishing, and the more stereotyped civil servant under conditions now rapidly spreading throughout the Dependent Empire. A correspondent writes thus in *The Times* of the 11th May 1948 :

"In the view of the general public, the members of the I.C.S., whose normal administrative charge may have been the size of a European country were just 'civil servants' differing little in status and responsibility from a clerk in Whitehall, or the local food controller, or the registrar of a diocese. This is a monstrous misappreciation of the role and the great work which for over a century the civil service in India performed for England and the Empire."

This judgment applies equally to the Dependent Empire. In the first phase of British rule the functions of the District Officer in tropical Africa, or of his equivalent in Malaya, like those of the member of the I.C.S., bear little resemblance to those of a clerk in Whitehall or of the local food controller. In many parts of tropical Africa he appears as the embodiment of power and

authority, ubiquitous and omnipotent in the eyes of millions unable to decipher the texts of laws published in official gazettes in some distant centre of government. The conditions of the time made it impossible for him to become the stereotyped civil servant moving along the tramlines of a rigid routine and circumscribed by legal minutiae. One day he may have heard himself apostrophised by some abject suppliant as "his (or her) mother and father" in accents of sincerity rather than of sycophancy. On the next he may have been exposed to all the stratagems of deceit by some crafty chief, or even soundly rated by an irascible notability, with a reminder that he was young enough to be the grandson of his interlocutor and that he had not even a proper knowledge of the language of the people to whom he had seen fit to dictate. In any event his duties made it necessary for him to interpret the will of the ruling power to a vast public of alien peoples and to their traditional or accredited rulers; and also to enforce the wish of the ruling power with very slender resources, more often than not, other than his own qualities of mind and character. It has been claimed that, in parts of India, members of the I.C.S. enjoyed so much personal prestige that they have even come to share a place in the hierarchy of spirits worthy of worship. In the Dependent Empire there may be no authenticated stories of visits to the shrines of departed District Officers for the deposit of votive offerings consisting of the commodities associated with their mundane appetites, and now almost inaccessible to less fortunate mortals, like bottles of whisky and boxes of cigars. Such legends may be peculiar to the remoter recesses of India. But they would not be altogether incredible in some of the remoter recesses of the Dependent Empire.

This first stage of the rule of law has long since merged into the next stage, even in the most backward parts of the Dependent Empire. In the second stage, the main preoccupation of government, namely, keeping the peace

and the protection of property, has had its natural sequel. Marshal Lyauty, the most famous administrator of modern times in French territories overseas, was fond of quoting the Latin tag, *Ense et aratro*. "After the sword, the plough-share ; after pacification, production." The protection of property provides both the opportunity and the incentive to turn it to profitable account. This becomes a collective social interest. It has taken a wide variety of forms ; but whatever form it has taken, it has introduced a new element into the civil service, which has changed its character and internal organisation. The Technical Officer with specialised functions has made his appearance. The Agricultural Officer, the Forestry Officer, the Veterinary Officer and others have taken their place beside the District Officer. These new arrivals have, in most places, already been preceded by the legally trained professional magistrate, against whom the District Officer, as the exponent and champion of common-sense justice untrammelled by legal technicalities, has so often fought a stubborn rearguard action. But he has been as unsuccessful in keeping the trained lawyer from the magisterial bench as he has been in shutting the doors of the court to the esurient native lawyer anxious to foster litigation as a means of preying on his less sophisticated compatriots. Professional technique triumphs and the layman must yield to the expert. Yet although the District Officer has had to surrender authority in several spheres, he has remained the general interpreter of the will of the government. His task has become more and more that of a public relations officer (long before any such official designation was invented) on behalf of other agents of government at least as conspicuous as himself. His claim to continued utility has lain in a closer acquaintance, either real or presumed, with the native mind and a more perfect appreciation of native needs ; a claim generally reinforced by a better knowledge of the native language than that possessed by his technical colleagues. His

services as an intermediary remained in demand. A veterinary officer might insist on the enforcement of an order for the dipping of cattle, as a safeguard against the spread of some tick-borne disease injurious or fatal to stock. On the District Officer would devolve the work of propaganda (long before the word had found its way into the official vocabulary in daily use) needed to overcome the obscurantism repugnant to commonsense no less than to science ; to convince the cattle-owners that the disease which they dreaded was disseminated by ticks and not by evil spirits ; or, if the cattle-owners happened to be Hindus, to overcome their scruples against taking life in any creature, including the ticks which infect their cattle. On the District Officer would devolve the task of deciding what should be done when the owners of the cattle had abandoned their stock rather than submit to the order to drive them to the dipping-tank. Or the intervention of the District Officer might be sought because a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the dependency, disquieted by the prevalence of murder as a sequel to an act of seduction amongst a certain tribe, had seen fit to recommend a public execution as a deterrent measure. At least one District Officer, now in honourable retirement, will remember the part which he played as a public relations officer in such a situation. The district in which the public execution was ordained was remote from the centre of government, where all executions had previously taken place in a gaol equipped with a scaffold which conformed to all standard regulations. For an execution in a remote up-country station the department of works was instructed to provide a portable scaffold for conveyance to the required destination and for erection at the appointed time. The District Officer was, of course, the official called upon to assemble the local chiefs and tribesmen to witness the execution after hearing a suitable harangue by himself on the heinous character of taking human life as a crime against the whole community, and

on the determination of the government to set its face against the tribal view that it was the duty of an outraged husband to take the life of the man who had supplanted him in his wife's affections. On the evening before the execution, while the District Officer was preparing a suitable homily, he was interrupted by an unwelcome visitor. This was an itinerant missionary, who begged to be allowed access to the cell in the station prison in which the condemned man awaited execution. As the latter was a pagan and not a Christian, the District Officer was reluctant to accede to the missionary's request, but, not wishing to appear hostile to a minister of the Christian religion, he finally yielded. In administering ghostly comfort to the pagan awaiting execution, the missionary must have expatiated on the penalties in store in the future life for evil-doers ; for his ministrations left the condemned man with the settled conviction that his mode of dispatch from the present life would be by burning and not by hanging, as he had previously supposed. The unfortunate man was petrified with terror. So much so that the services of a native dispenser had to be sought for the administration of the most appropriate drug in the station dispensary, and the aid of the two most robust constables in the native police force had to be summoned, before the condemned man could be conducted with suitable decorum to the scaffold. Finally, with the help of the two constables, who mounted the scaffold with him, the condemned man was secured ready for the drop in the presence of the assembled chiefs and multitude. The District Officer delivered his homily and the signal for the execution was given. But the design of the scaffold, which was equipped with a trap-door and a drop on each side as well as in the centre, or else its mode of erection, had been faulty, for, when the signal was given, the condemned man remained in position with the noose round his neck, while the two robust constables disappeared simultaneously from view with a prodigious clatter. The



surroundings were shaken by the portentous shout of mirth which arose.

The protection of property, of giving a new value to man-power for the productive purposes of peaceful enterprise, has created a new social interest in the protection of life and the care of physical well-being. The control and eradication of human disease has carried the civil service further along the road to specialisation. In the wake of public hygiene, public education follows, British instinct inclining, rightly or wrongly, to this order of priority. But the second stage in the rule of law has already merged imperceptibly into the third. A succession of stages ceases henceforth to be distinguishable. There is only a continuous process in which new agencies appear, designed to organise new public interests, while existing agencies are now scrapped as they become obsolete. The application of science to industry, even within the Dependent Empire, is enough in itself to perpetuate this process. The steam-engine having transformed methods of locomotion and systems of transport, the internal-combustion engine has transformed them again, and in so doing has created new and more precisely differentiated spheres of public authority. As commerce has expanded, the government has been constrained more and more to intervene between buyer and seller; to regulate the status of partnerships and of joint stock corporations; to control the operations of banks or of shipping and insurance companies. As population has shifted and become concentrated, government has been constrained to intervene between landlord and tenant. Public interests change and fluctuate. New statutes are enacted in such profusion that the Dependent Empire has come to share the familiar joke that only a lawyer can be expected to know the law. Such is the present condition of organised government in which the civil service has become an array of specialised departments, including some of doubtful permanency, professional rather than political in

outlook. The District Officer has vanished. If he has not become a specialist, such as a labour officer, concerned with the organisation of trade unions or even a public relations officer of the modern variety, concerned with broadcasting programmes or the preparation of hand-outs to the local press, he survives only in an attenuated form near the centre of the administrative machine, dealing in briefs and agenda for committees and the mysteries of co-ordination. *Stat magni nominis umbra.*<sup>1</sup>

Into this modernised civil service candidates from amongst the dependent peoples themselves are being introduced in an increasing degree. And the demand for this concession is increasingly insistent. Accustomed to a form of government in which the authority of the civil servant has been ultra-conspicuous, the dependent peoples naturally advance, as one of their first claims, the claim that the executive work of the government be entrusted to native officials. Locally recruited judges and magistrates, police officers and health officers, forestry officers, inspectors of schools and the rest give an appearance of self-government on the surface. A tonic is given to local self-respect and the clamour for the sons of the soil to gather some more juicy plums which ripen on the branches of the great job-tree is quietened. Only in the abstract realm of constitutional theory can policy be nicely separated from administrative practice, and practical people know well enough that a locally staffed civil service means a practical step in the right direction, that is, in the direction of self-management, even if policy-making remains in alien hands. But the more discerning know equally well that the step is only a short one towards the destination in view; and that even the conquest of the higher appointments in the civil service is a trivial gain so long as the ultimate control of the civil service, which in plain language means the power to appoint and dismiss, is withheld. They also know that the civil

<sup>1</sup> "Only the shadow of a great name looms."

service is only a subordinate instrument of government in communities such as theirs, where it can never become an effective policy-making body in the wings of the political stage, or an all-important prompter discreetly screened from view dictating the lines to be repeated by an over-crowded, over-burdened and imperfectly instructed caste rendering the drama of government policy to the tumultuous public of a modern state.

In the Dependent Empire, on the other hand, the business of government is not so unwieldy as to elude continuous and effective popular control under a system of responsible self-government; neither is it likely to become so, even in the largest of the territories which at some future date may qualify for self-governing status. When that status is attained, the new self-governing units of the British Commonwealth will find themselves equipped with a disciplined civil service trained to the practice of self-effacement in the making and shaping of general policy and dutifully pliant to a superior authority. If bureaucracy encroaches on popular government, the encroachment will be due to a voluntary surrender through the failure of political leadership and political organisation. It was recently declared on the highest authority<sup>1</sup> that among the tasks which must devolve on the present generation of officials still recruited from outside sources for service in the Dependent Empire is that of training, inspiring, and guiding the future leaders of the dependent peoples, both inside and outside government service. It is difficult to see what scope for leadership can be found inside the civil service, except in anticipation of the failure of parliamentary self-government.

<sup>1</sup> Foreword to *H.M. Colonial Services. Post-war Opportunities*. Leaflet published in 1945 by the Colonial Office.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND RELATIONS

IN spite of the persistent expansion of the rule of law there remains an immense field of human behaviour which no laws enacted by any sovereign legislature can successfully regulate. In this field unwritten law reigns supreme. The field comprises the whole complex of actions and attitudes which are recognised as belonging to the private life of the citizen. In the Dependent Empire, as has already been mentioned, there are not as many as one hundred thousand Europeans, mostly of British origin and antecedents and mostly only temporary sojourners, amongst nearly as many millions of others. With such a disparity of numbers it might be assumed that the European minority are only important as the political and economic directors of the dependent peoples and that their private lives are a factor of little account in the future relationship of Britain and the Dependent Empire. Such an assumption would be rash. The behaviour of Britain's overseas emissaries in their private lives ; their impulses to sociability or unsociability ; their colour consciousness or unconsciousness ; the sympathies and antipathies which they reveal both " out of hours " and in the many spheres where public and private conduct overlap—these and kindred matters have a far-reaching importance.

In political and public life equalitarian principles have been firmly upheld under British rule. As the early Christian Church declined to recognise any distinction between persons of a different race or social status, so British rule in the Dependent Empire declines to recognise any distinctions of creed or colour. In the eyes

of government and the law all His Majesty's subjects are equal. In the political system of certain dependencies a disguised colour-bar may be detected in a parliamentary franchise, for example, which is based on pecuniary or linguistic qualifications which have the effect of discriminating against some racial group. But the colour-bar must at least be decently concealed beneath some not too transparent constitutional fig-leaf. And if the jury system is liable to manipulation for racial ends, the fault does not lie in the racial partiality of the architects of the system. Repudiation of racial or religious discrimination is affirmed in principle again and again in constitutional instruments such as Commissions and Royal Instructions issued to Colonial Governors. It is reflected in legislation and the organisation and administration of institutions under state control. It permeates every phase and feature of public life. It is even in evidence in all social entertainment of an official character, if only because such entertainment is linked to institutions. When His Excellency the Governor, as the personal representative of the Sovereign, dispenses hospitality, his guests are chosen by virtue of their civic or ecclesiastical status. Mr. James Wilson dines at Government House, not because he is a member of the M.C.C., still less because he plays a round of golf with His Excellency every Thursday evening, but because he has been elected to the chairmanship of the Planters Association. At Government House Mr. Wilson meets Mr. Ah Chong, because Mr. Ah Chong has become president of the Chamber of Commerce ; or Mr. Wilson meets Sheikh Tahir Omari because the Sheikh has become Imâm of the Mosque and president of the Moslem Boy Scouts. Such rules of public and official conduct are doubtless dictated by necessity in territories where the population is a blend of many peoples, and where Europeans have no monopoly of social or economic importance. In some quarters Asians and Africans might challenge the contention

that official behaviour in the Dependent Empire is untainted by racial discrimination, even if the wide area where public and private life over-lap is ignored, or if within that area officialdom is given the benefit of every doubt. Indians as well as Africans have raised violent protests against the official policy, pursued in many parts of the British tropics, of allocating separate areas for residential purposes to different races in the larger centres of population. In point of fact, residential separation, as applied by municipalities and such-like authorities, has always involved joint discriminations against Europeans as well as others. Europeans have been debarred from occupying any part of the area allowed to Asians or Africans, as rigorously as Asians and Africans have been debarred from occupying any part of an area allotted to Europeans. They have shown as little resentment as motorists have shown in being prohibited from driving on tracks reserved for pedal-bicyclists. The bicyclists, on the other hand, have on occasion shown resentment at being excluded from the carriage-way reserved for motorists. The wise legislator prefers not to arouse slumbering passions by drawing attention to human inequalities. When Indians objected, as they did, to the reservation of the highlands of Kenya for European settlement to the exclusion of Indians, their objections were met by the argument that in any case climatic conditions would prevent Indian settlement. To which an Indian spokesman retorted that in that case it would have been wiser to leave it to the climate to settle the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. In many of the larger tropical towns with a mixed population races would sort themselves out by a process of voluntary segregation. But not in all. Hence compulsory measures of segregation based on entirely legitimate considerations of social convenience and hygiene. Residential segregation, unfortunately, has had to be translated into legislative enactments, though these enactments are little more than a public recognition of

the demonstrable fact that, as a general rule, the standards of cleanliness, both personal and domestic, observed by Europeans are more exacting than those observed by non-Europeans. In many towns in the tropics the sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth must continue to live in close proximity. The European must accommodate himself to the nuisance of interrupted sleep, while Chinese let off explosive fireworks all night long near his doorstep, or Africans beat drums and dance. On occasions Chinese or Africans may find their European neighbours obnoxious in various ways. But the risk of infection from proximity to neighbours who are indifferent to the attentions of lice or who leave refuse congenial to mosquitoes as a breeding-ground for malaria, is a risk from which the citizen may be entitled to expect public protection. The personal and domestic hygiene of some Europeans in the tropics is by no means above reproach ; and if and when disparities in social standards no longer follow the main lines of racial cleavage, residential segregation will lose its racial aspect and racial polemics will have to find other bones of contention.

Private life, of course, reflects different and more spontaneous modes of behaviour than those which govern official practice. There are, roughly, two groups of dependencies which must be distinguished in any discussion of social behaviour in the Dependent Empire. One group consists of the larger territories in Asia and Africa in most of which the only European element is a distinctive community of exiles who are only temporary sojourners in a strange land, representing public administration, the fighting services, and overseas interests in industry, commerce and finance. In contrast with those territories there is a miscellany of small dependencies where there is mixed society, including non-European natives, Europeans and near Europeans or both, which may or may not be British in its origin and antecedents. To this miscellany belong the dependencies in and around the Caribbean

Sea, those in the Mediterranean, Mauritius and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean as well as one or two other small and little-known islands in other seas. In these dependencies there is no distinctive exile community of any consequence except that composed of the fighting services in dependencies like Gibraltar or Malta. In any event the exiles, as a civilian community, are too few either to influence social practice or to create a nucleus whose social behaviour can have any bearing on sentiment, either amicable or the reverse, towards Britain. A recent visitor to this country from Jamaica was successful in giving some publicity to his view that the racial attitude of the British had caused bitterness and resentment in his country. It was perhaps fortunate for the visitor that he was able to escape close interrogation. The racial attitude of the British, as exemplified in the present-day representatives of the United Kingdom, has no chance of being demonstrated in Jamaica, for the simple reason that there are not enough of them about the place. The various modes of inter-racial behaviour of society in Jamaica are only attributable to Britain in the very generalised sense that British national policy over a period of three centuries has been partially instrumental in shaping the present social structure of Jamaica. Within that structure inter-racial behaviour has taken on certain forms under purely local pressure. An eminent authority<sup>1</sup> with first-hand knowledge of Jamaica during the late Victorian Era held that there was virtually no colour-bar in the island. It is certainly the case that to-day professional and pecuniary status cuts across any straightforward colour-bar in Jamaica as it does in some other parts of the West Indies. It would be a complete misrepresentation of either the influence or the character of present-day British behaviour in the Dependent Empire to hold it in any way accountable for inter-racial practice in any dependency with a settled European community.

<sup>1</sup> The late Lord Olivier.



If British behaviour is held accountable some identity of inter-racial practice might at least be expected. As it is, there are only bewildering discrepancies and vagaries. In Bermuda and Bahamas there is a colour-bar as rigid as that of the southern states of America, the principal reason being the desire of communities dependent on a tourist trade with the United States to conform to social practices congenial to their *clientèle*. In British Honduras, on the other hand, which recently proclaimed the warmth of its sentiments towards Britain and its aversion to close union with the Republic of Guatemala, there is no semblance of a colour-bar. In Mauritius, in the Eastern Hemisphere, colour consciousness penetrates into the inner recesses of society so deeply as to affect semi-public activities like the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides, as well as organised sport. Such practices are the creation of a local society in which the influence of British behaviour is negligible. Not only are exponents of British behaviour a small minority, but local society, not only in Mauritius, but in all the older parts of the Dependent Empire with European affinities, whether British or Continental, is by no means pliant or amenable to social tuition, if offered.

Scores of commentators, many of them drawing on experience in India, have singled out the exclusiveness of the British in alien surroundings for adverse criticism. If social aloofness is a national characteristic it has little chance of being conspicuous in the smaller dependencies outside Asia and Africa, for reasons just explained. The indictment, if introduced, can only be directed against members of the fighting services stationed in dependencies classified as garrison or fortress colonies. The fighting services have a special excuse for a propensity to social segregation. Apart from the transitory character of their sojourn in overseas territories they are constituted and organised, more or less, as a matter of professional necessity, as separate and self-contained communities. The presence of service wives and families accentuates their isolation.

A garrison can hardly be absorbed into local society. In several dependencies there are linguistic impediments to its absorption. There are about half a dozen dependencies in which English is not the domestic language of white society. The English, which is often admirably mastered, is the English of official, commercial or professional use. It is not the English of intimacy, a ready vehicle of sentiment, irony or jest, but the formal and impersonal language of the scientific discourse, the technical report or the minutes of the company meeting. The isolation of members of the fighting services and of their wives is excusable, if regrettable. It was illuminated early in the war in a minor comedy in the deliberations of Whitehall. Military exigencies having necessitated the repatriation of service wives from Malta, a newspaper reporter in search of copy took the opportunity of interviewing a group of these ladies on their disembarkation in England. As a result of this interview, a leading evening newspaper came out with the report that no women were left in Malta. The report caused a flutter in the dovecotes of Whitehall, where, in the Department of State responsible for civil affairs in Malta, a very senior permanent official was tempted to jump to the conclusion that, without the knowledge and approval of his department, the service department had arranged the evacuation from their native island of Maltese women and children *en bloc*. It was not immediately appreciated that with the departure from Malta of British service wives there would be no women left in Malta, at least none within the horizons of service wives.

Warmth or coolness of sentiment towards Britain, a sense of attachment to the British Commonwealth in the scattered ocean dependencies of the Caribbean Sea, the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean will not be greatly affected by the social behaviour of the few perambulating emissaries of Britain who find their way to Jamaica or Trinidad, Gibraltar or Cyprus, Seychelles or Mauritius.

A greater responsibility lies at the door of the citizens of this country. The exigencies of education and professional training are drawing to this country increasing numbers of the younger generation from European or near European society in the ocean dependencies east, south and west. The war has already made this country, its institutions and its people familiar to very many of these citizens of the Dependent Empire. If first-hand experience of this country is a happy experience which leaves behind it memories of intimate and congenial relationships, the seeds of a new conception of British citizenship may germinate. It must be recognised that members of a small and politically subordinate territory, often deeply divided by internal antagonisms, find little in their native surroundings to inspire them with the sense of national pride which is the birthright of the home-born British or of the citizens of the self-governing nations of the Commonwealth. Without personal associations with Britain or its people local patriotism has been inclined to express itself in an assertive isolationism, which perpetual reminders of political subordination have aggravated. The appeal to imperial loyalty has had to be pitched in a utilitarian key. The local reaction is a cynicism which found outspoken expression in the outburst of a delegate at a recent West Indian Conference, who declared that, if Barbados had to remain under colonial status, American rather than British allegiance was preferred by almost all Barbadians—a sentiment which, it should be added, other delegates were quick to repudiate on behalf of their various constituents. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The maxim is not an ideal formula for imperial loyalty. The loyalty of Cypriot Greeks who agitate for union with Greece is not likely to be bought, or if bought to be kept, by the assurance accompanying the British Government's refusal to accommodate recessionist aspirations, that Cyprus will remain a valued and prosperous member of the British Common-

wealth. The Cypriot agitation need not be taken tragically. It is partly a half-mischievous piece of exhibitionism on the part of a volatile people with an unhappy history. A few dozen Cypriot Greeks with agreeable memories of student days in this country—if one of them could pick up a rowing blue at Cambridge and another become President of the Union at Oxford so much the better still—would do far more to create a contented Cypriot community within the British Commonwealth than any promise of loaves and fishes, particularly at a time when Britain is hardly qualified for the rôle of a dispenser of plenty. What is needed is the growth in all the dependent peoples of a spontaneous attachment to the British Commonwealth “for better for worse, for richer for poorer.” Attachment admittedly cannot thrive on thin air. Neither can it thrive on cupboard-love alone. Its first condition, apart from changes in political status, is a nucleus of citizens with happy personal associations with the people and institutions of this country. For this development circumstances are now much more favourable than they have been in the past.

Into these calculations questions of colour need hardly enter. The smaller dependencies may send a few citizens to this country with a “touch of the tar brush.” They will not send many heavily daubed. Some such, inevitably, must appear amongst the migratory element in the population of our seaport towns. But the great majority of these scattered citizens of the British Commonwealth are fully qualified not only to participate in, but to adorn, our own social and recreational life without evoking the emotions which find expression in the rhetorical question whether you would like to see sister or daughter married to a coloured man. The attachment or indifference to their British status of increasing numbers of those who will be leaders of society in many dependencies will be decided in this country rather than in the dependencies concerned. It will be a minor national failure if their

attachment is not secured. Far better that they should return to their home surroundings with the pangs of an inverted nostalgia of probably brief duration, than that they should quit our shores shaking from their feet the dust of a spiritual loneliness and discomfort not easily forgotten.

Far more baffling perplexities impede intimate relationships between the millions of dependent peoples in Asia and Africa and the increasingly numerous and increasingly organised exile communities of Britishers who spend the days of their working careers amongst them. In this context it is worth recalling a judgment once delivered by Lawrence of Arabia <sup>1</sup> :

“ We export two chief kinds of Englishmen,” he wrote, “ who in foreign parts divide themselves into two opposed classes. Some feel deeply the influences of the native people and try to adjust themselves to its atmosphere and spirit. To fit themselves modestly into the picture, they suppress all in them that would be discordant with local habits and colours. They imitate the native as far as possible and so avoid friction in their daily life. They are like the people, but not of the people, and their half perceptible difference gives them a sham influence often greater than their merit. They urge the people among whom they live into strange, unnatural courses by imitating them so well that they are imitated back again. The other class of Englishman is the larger class. In the same circumstances of exile they reinforce their character by memories of the life they have left. In reaction against their foreign surroundings they take refuge in the England that was theirs. They assert their aloofness, their immunity the more vividly for their loneliness and weakness. They impress the peoples amongst whom they live by giving them an example of the complete Englishman, ‘ the foreigner intact ’.”

Thirty years ago, or more, the contrast which appealed to the subtle mind of Lawrence might have been illustrated in a music-hall sketch portraying a hirsute white man clad in a loin-cloth, who had obviously “ gone native,” confronting another white man clad in a dinner-jacket, at the door of his tent, after a day’s travel in tropical bush. Now the exile in the lonely up-country station, separated from others of his speech and colour for whole months on end, has passed into legend. The pioneer

<sup>1</sup> Introduction, by T. E. Lawrence, to *Arabia Deserta*, by C. M. Doughty.

days are over, when exiles found themselves in authentically alien surroundings unrelieved by the company of their own kind. In such circumstances a few achieved a spurious intimacy with Asian or African by the imitative antics described by Lawrence. Some even contracted inter-racial marriages which were solemn and binding engagements. Some embraced the religion of Islam in areas where Islam held sway. Far more remained the "foreigner intact," lonely creatures in alien surroundings, staunch representatives of the second class of the two distinguished by Lawrence.

Under modern conditions the two classes are indistinguishable. The wilds have disappeared from the map of to-day. Whatever their temperamental proclivities, exiles can no longer escape from the clutches of a progressively organised exile society. This progressive organisation has been interlocked with the progressive organisation on more formal and impersonal lines of the functions which exile society represents. These are government and commercial enterprise, even now hardly differentiated in the native mind, while identified with a more sharply distinctive exile community. But this community is no longer so remote from view for the great majority as to be thought of as almost impersonal because it embodies the government, a force often interfering to control the life of this or that group in a more or less unpredictable fashion. It is now under observation as a collection of human beings in whose behaviour clues will be found to the working of forces no longer passively accepted like sunshine and rain. The millions of Asia and Africa now travel. The motor-bus and the motor-lorry not only carry passengers, but disseminate news and views. The inner workings of exile society are no longer revealed only to a closed caste of domestics and club servants. The exiles themselves are no longer classified in the native minds as all birds of a single feather. Amongst them social and occupational distinctions are noted.

Thirty years ago a native from the east coast of Africa accompanying his English master to Europe was amazed to find that white men were engaged in manual labour when the steamer berthed at the quayside at Marseilles. Native Africa now knows better. It has more than an elementary understanding of the stratification of exile society ; of its snobberies and taboos ; its greed and its generosity ; its ruthless competitiveness ; its loyalties and disloyalties ; its deep divisions of belief ; its religion and irreligion ; its enthusiasms and hypocrisies ; its *varying standards of honesty and sexual morality* ; the *refinement or crudity of its manners*. The behaviour of its women-folk is closely observed, notably the phenomenon of the woman in some post of public or professional responsibility ; the austerity of some lives ; the frivolity and futility of others whose daily tally is made up of used bridge-markers, heavily piled ash-trays or well-thumbed cocktail glasses. If native Asia and native Africa detects any common denominator in the representatives of the white man's culture, it is the abhorrence of poverty.

The inner workings of exile society are revealed more and more to the multitude. But exile society itself is still a closed society. Contacts between exile and native remain on a professional level governed by an appropriate etiquette. It is probably true to say that inter-racial intimacy is only possible where inter-racial marriage is an accepted practice. An Indian, a Chinese, or a negro may be a graduate of the same university as some British exile who happens to be his neighbour in later life in another continent. The two may have chanced to eat dinners at the same inn, or to walk the wards at the same hospital. But the importance of academic instruction or professional training amongst the ingredients of social education is easily exaggerated. Such influences are trivial compared with the cumulative effect of divergent influences from infancy to adolescence. And intercourse between British and African or Asian at the stage of

higher education or professional training is achieved only in a few score of cases out of a hundred million. "The differences between peoples in tradition, customs, social conventions and consequently in habits of thought and feelings are so great that the surprising thing is not that they should give rise to inter-racial ill-feeling and misunderstandings, but rather that those difficulties should in so many instances be overcome." Such is the conclusion of an authority<sup>1</sup> who made inter-racial relations the study of a lifetime. The same authority, commenting on the social separateness of the British exile and the Indian in India, judged that this separateness did not differ from that which may be found between different social groups in England. Without the inhibitions due to racial or colour sentiment and without any linguistic barrier, the conditions of intimacy between British and local society at any level in any part of the Dependent Empire in Africa or Asia would still be inexistent and impossible of achievement within any measurable distance of time.

This situation can be accepted as a matter of course without *recrimination or resentment*. No appreciable difference will be made by any change in the political status of the dependencies or in the political function and outlook of British exiles. Well-meaning enthusiasts occasionally deliver exhortations to greater social intimacy between members of different races. Not infrequently the exclusiveness of exile society is depicted in the colours of racial arrogance by its own disgruntled rejects. More often discussion is clouded by a confusion of thought between social separateness and occasional public exhibitions of inter-racial bad manners. Racial difference is only one of many factors in a situation which may well baffle social reformers. It must be recognised that, as an almost invariable rule, close social contacts are only possible between a small number of people who speak alike (which is not the same thing as speaking the same

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Oldham. *Christianity and the Race Problem*. Chapter III.



tongue), share the same rules of behaviour, cultivate the same tastes, manners and even mannerisms, and have a tacitly agreed code of tolerance for mutual discrepancies of views and prejudices. It has sometimes been said that social exclusiveness has led the British to make enemies where they might have made friends. British aloofness is attributed either to racial prejudice which is held to be more common amongst Anglo-Saxon peoples than amongst southern Europeans, or else it is diagnosed as a symptom of the arrogance of a ruling nation. Unhappily, it is difficult, it not impossible, for aloofness not to appear offensive whenever it is not taken as a matter of course, and the critics of Britain, both British and others, inevitably detect an objectionable element in attitudes which are utterly innocent of any conscious sense of superiority. "Imperialism is the pleasure of living with one's inferiors"; this delicious extract from a paper written by a candidate in an Oxford scholarship examination in 1912 is deservedly recorded in serious literature.<sup>1</sup> Probably the youth of to-day thinks differently from the youth of 1912. And there has often been much to excuse the imperialists who lived with, and yet apart from, their inferiors. Aloofness is occasionally demanded by political expediency. Intimacy between an official in a responsible post and a member of a local community in the Dependent Empire may easily be misinterpreted. An unscrupulous person might seek such an intimacy in order to exploit it for personal ends. And the hand of friendship, if proffered, is not invariably grasped. The exponents of British rule overseas have often been forced into Olympian aloofness by political hostility to their aims. A charming glimpse of one of the most celebrated of such Olympian retreats is given in the memoirs of a traveller in Egypt<sup>2</sup> in the eighteen-nineties.

"There is the Turf Club where you are watching the Englishmen who have done so much to regenerate Egypt. . . . There are Garstin

<sup>1</sup> L. B. Namier. *England in the Age of the American Revolution*. Chapter IV.

<sup>2</sup> Sir A. Conan Doyle. *Memoirs and Adventures*. Chapter XIII.

and Wilcocks, the great water captains who have coaxed the Nile to right and left. . . . There you may see Rogers, who stamped out cholera ; Scott, who reformed the law ; Palmer, who relieved the overtaxed fellahen. . . .”

Great men, those by-gone exponents of British performance, shouldering the white man's burden with unshaken assurance, indifferent to the clamour of popular approval or disapproval.

In any event no widespread intimacy between white exiles in the Dependent Empire and members of the dependent peoples is possible without an identity of social and economic standards which, for many years to come, can only be achieved in very few instances. This situation has been understood well enough by the French, whose aptitude for intimacy with people of alien races has often been contrasted with the social separateness of the British. But this aptitude extends only to such aliens as are willing and able to be transformed into Frenchmen. Between France and Britain there is a difference in administrative methods which corresponds to a difference in temperament. Under the French yoke a deliberate effort is made to transform Asians and Africans into Frenchmen. Under the British yoke this transformation is not deliberate. Indeed deliberate transformation is repudiated, though the conditions of the modern world are slowly but surely reducing differences in social and economic standards throughout the British Commonwealth, or at least creating larger minorities whose standards approximate to those of this country. Hence a gradual increase of opportunities for closer social relations between His Majesty's subjects who belong to this country and His Majesty's subjects in what are now the dependent parts of the British Commonwealth. Past practice gives little of a clue to the ability of the rising generation to take advantage of the opportunities which the future will clearly offer. Hitherto the contacts between British exiles and the dependent peoples

of tropical Asia and tropical Africa have been of a formal or ceremonious character, touching only the fringe of social relationships. The British, with their profound sense of ritual and addiction to ceremonial, have been conspicuously successful in the formal contacts appropriate to the exigencies of British rule in the past. It has been an object-lesson in the decorum of inter-racial relations on a high level to see a British administrator in his element on occasions such as a "Baraza" or convocation of native chiefs in some part of tropical Africa or an exchange of compliments with an Arab notable or a Malay potentate.

In the Dependent Empire, in the past, the representatives of British rule have always preferred dealings with peoples altogether remote in culture and in mode of life to dealings with peoples of European antecedents or partially Europeanised. The former may not have proved more accommodating to their rulers. Some of them may have been truculent and turbulent. But they have appealed to the sentimental romanticism of the British character. There is hardly a member of the colonial service, past or present, who has served both in tropical Africa and in the smaller and older dependencies who has not found both his official life and his social surroundings far more to his taste during his career in Africa than during his career elsewhere. Equally, there is hardly a member of the colonial service who has served only in tropical Africa whose liking for individual Africans is not in inverse ratio to African adoption of European ways. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery it is a form of flattery which the British European would prefer to dispense with in his contacts with Asians and Africans. A vitriolic French Anglophobe<sup>1</sup> made a *bon mot* of some notoriety when he said that for every true English gentleman niggers begin at Calais. It is doubtful whether the introduction of the word "gentleman" implied discrimination between different varieties of Englishmen.

<sup>1</sup> Henri Béraud, formerly editor of the French weekly journal *Gringoire*.

But the saying shows lack of discrimination. If niggers begin at Calais, they end, so it would seem, at the Southern Sahara and beyond the coastal belt of the Eastern Mediterranean. The primitive savage and the warrior of the desert are often spoken of in terms of endearment which no British exile would ever apply to the Levantine or to the Europeanised Asian or African. A temperamental distaste for Europeanised Asians or Africans is a defect in a nation which stands committed to exhibit many features of its national life as worthy of imitation by Asians and Africans.

## CHAPTER IX

### RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

To economists the British yoke will appear as part of the equipment used to harness the Dependent Empire to a world-wide economy ; to constitutionalists it will appear as an instrument for the consolidation of a British Commonwealth of Nations. The picture may be drawn in a variety of ways ; but in the picture, sometimes in the foreground, at other times in the background, the Christian Churches find a place. Some of the Dependent Empire belongs to Christendom ; most of it lies outside Christendom, or in the " mission field," where even now, in certain areas, missionaries as well as traders are associated in the native mind with the general equipment of European rule, although missions have frequently preceded both trade and the flag.

As Christianity claims the allegiance of only a small proportion of His Majesty's subjects in the Dependent Empire, British rule takes its official stand on religious neutrality. Its attitude is one of benevolence to all religions, so long as they do not offend against political expediency. Though neutral, official authority is sympathetic to religion. Colonial Governors, on appointment to an African dependency in which the creed of Islam or pagan cults may predominate, are enjoined by the terms of their commissions to promote religion. Such injunctions are open to a wide variety of interpretations, particularly in an age where an expression such as a " godless religion " is no longer a contradiction in terms. Official authority has consistently set its face against the exploitation of British rule for the promotion of Christian belief at the expense of Islam or any other well-established

religion. Although a devout High Churchman—or perhaps all the more readily for that reason—the late Lord Lloyd, when Secretary of State for the Colonies, was prominent in support of a movement for building a mosque in the middle of London for the benefit of His Majesty's Moslem subjects. Similarly, a government in the Dependent Empire might give financial and administrative support to a legal system based on the Koran in a Moslem country, assist in the upkeep of mosques, and even go to the length of prohibiting the activities of Christian missionaries, if likely to cause serious native dissatisfaction. In dependencies where religious organisations, both Christian and non-Christian, manage schools it is usual for grants of public money to be given impartially to both on merit as judged by purely secular standards. Generally speaking, there are no established Churches in the Dependent Empire in the sense that they are in any way financed by the State, not even in dependencies where the population is wholly or mainly Christian. The imperial authorities have long since ceased to dispense ecclesiastical patronage, though there are one or two survivals of state endowment for particular Churches. In Mauritius, for example, the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Scottish Presbyterian clergy derive their emoluments from public revenue raised by general taxation in accordance with the terms of an agreement nearly a hundred and fifty years old. To-day, when by far the greater part of the population of Mauritius is Indian both in race and religion, this anachronism is not unnaturally coming under Indian attack.

No official attitude other than one of religious neutrality is possible in a Dependent Empire in which many religions exist side by side. Religious conflict has become rare. Where it has taken place it has almost invariably been political in character and inspiration. Its episodes belong almost entirely to the past, like the pitched battles

in Uganda at the end of the last century, first between Moslems and Christians and then between Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians supported by France and Britain respectively in a period of international rivalry in which the focal point was the valley of the Nile. Prophets may again arise in Moslem Africa preaching crusades for the extermination of the European infidel, but the advent of self-government in the dependent Empire will not be conducive to fresh instalments of potential Madhis.<sup>1</sup> Not only is there a lull in religious conflict, but the balance of different religions seems to have reached a temporary equilibrium, and religious, as well as political, frontiers are more or less stabilised. Christianity has made good its claim to the islands of the Southern Pacific as well as to some enclaves in tropical Africa—in Uganda and Nyasaland, for example—at the expense of pagan cults. The religions of Asia have held firm in Malaya and in tropical Africa in areas where they were established before the period of European penetration. Numerically Christianity is neither gaining much nor losing much. Certain parts of the Dependent Empire have belonged to Christendom for centuries. In the West Indies, for example, Christian Churches are social institutions with a history as long as that of European settlement on the western side of the Atlantic. They are part of the national furniture. They exert no single influence on the structure of society or on codes of human behaviour. In a matter of such far-reaching moral and social significance as the colour-bar they present no obvious united front. Their influence and attitude varies just as it does in this country. In the eighteenth century the French philosopher, Voltaire, satirically observed that the English had thirty-eight different religions but only one sauce. Thus in the present day it is only to be expected, and not necessarily to be deplored, that the official leaders of the various Churches in this country,

<sup>1</sup> A Messianic deliverer of the faithful.

and their lay adherents still more so, should be deeply divided on subjects such as the rights of property, the profit motive, or the propriety of a Christian nation participating in atomic warfare. "Assuredly I count the West Indies, both priests and people, amazingly debauched." So wrote one zealous dissenter to another with a critical eye on the Anglican clergy and Anglican laity of a slave-owning society in the hey-day of its affluence. In the next generation militant Christians of other denominations were causing a turmoil in the West Indies in a struggle which ended with the abolition of slavery. Inside any British area of Christendom there will be Christians on both sides of every economic and social fence.

In the West Indies negroes have joined the Christian fold with alacrity. Only the East Indian communities have held aloof. Forms of Christian worship which provide church music, collective hymn-singing and abundance of pulpit oratory have a very powerful appeal for the negro. So has the "Corybantic Christianity"<sup>1</sup> of the Salvation Army. The more sombre forms of Christianity have less attraction. It is noteworthy that, in spite of the West Indian negro's precarious circumstances and unhappy history, Christianity has not come to him in the guise of compensation in the next world for the hardships and injustices of his present lot. Religion cannot be the opium of the people, in the Marxist sense, in a people as light-hearted, emotionally fickle and generally indifferent to the future as the majority of West Indian negroes. If the Churches have failed to inculcate in them a desire for stable family life in preference to domestic drift and sexual promiscuity, it is certain that no other agency could have succeeded where the Churches have failed. The West Indian communities are deeply indebted, both as taxpayers and as law-abiding citizens, to the efforts of the Churches in the field of education.

The Mediterranean dependencies are another distinctive

<sup>1</sup> T. H. Huxley is the author of the phrase.



group in the religious geography of the Dependent Empire. In this group British rule confronts the two main branches of Christendom, the Latin and Greek Churches. In Gibraltar and Malta the Roman Catholic Church holds sway, in Cyprus the Greek Orthodox Church, with Israel represented by a substantial Jewish colony in Gibraltar and Islam by a substantial Turkish population in Cyprus. In the Mediterranean dependencies religion has an essentially international character which it lacks in dependencies where Christianity is of a specifically British brand, whether deriving from the Church of England as by law established or from the Free Churches. Gibraltar is the titular see of a very large Anglican diocese, which includes Rome. Indeed it is recorded that when an Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar was received at the Vatican by a predecessor of the present Pope, he was greeted in graceful and impeccable English by His Holiness with the observation: "I believe I have the honour to reside in Your Lordship's diocese." But the Church of England and other varieties of British Christianity have no adherents outside the British exile communities in the Mediterranean dependencies. The religious affinities of the peoples of Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus provide no semblance of any cultural or sentimental link with the British Commonwealth—unless such a link can be said to be provided by a few wealthy Gibraltarians who may have been educated in fashionable Roman Catholic public schools in this country, like Beaumont or Downside. In any case this degree of attachment to Britain through the ties of religion is more than neutralised by the inveterate Anglophobia of the large majority of a Catholic priesthood recruited in Ireland to whom the education of Gibraltarian youth beneath the Rock is largely entrusted, to the surprising satisfaction of official authority which has always exaggerated the influence of an acquaintance with the English language as a generator of British sentiment. In Malta the authority

of the Roman Catholic Church is probably as strong as in any part of the British Commonwealth ; and the existence of almost complete self-government enables it to exercise that authority, if it is minded to do so, for political ends. The official attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to any secular authority is, of course, conditioned not by any national sentiment but by the behaviour of the secular authority towards the Church and by that alone. It is highly improbable that in any dependency, least of all in one with a predominantly Roman Catholic population, the Church would find British authority unaccommodating. It is equally improbable that the Catholic Church would give any official countenance to political activities inconsistent with British interests. But the fact remains that the benevolence of the Catholic Church in a dependency like Malta depends on ecclesiastical judgments of expediency without any reinforcement of national sentiment. In Cyprus members of the higher clergy of the Greek Orthodox Church have come out into the open as advocates of union with Greece and secession from the British Commonwealth. Here political expediency has led the British authorities to remove high ecclesiastics from office by banishing them from the island.

Religious neutrality is the corollary of a policy of toleration and protection for all institutions unless objectionable on grounds of public policy—a matter in which British authority remains the responsible judge so long as the Dependent Empire falls short of self-government. Interference may be at the expense of a Christian zealot intent on carrying out the behest of his Master to preach the gospel in all lands, without counting the cost to himself or to public authorities who may be called on to quell a riot as the sequel to an act of Christian heroism ; or it may be at the expense of some fetish worshippers intent on a ritual murder. But normally religious activity takes its course without official let or hindrance on principles of free competition and private enterprise as in

the world of commerce and industry. And, as in the world of commerce and industry, competition sometimes ends in the elimination of competition and in the establishment of a religious monopoly. In the religious market (to pursue the commercial analogy) Christianity suffers, and in particular Protestant varieties of Christianity, from one disability. It offers no obvious or obviously suitable code of social regulations worked out in detail. At periods during its long history it has prescribed such codes. St. Paul worked painstakingly at prescribing such codes of behaviour for the first Christians recruited from the Hellenised Jews of the Diaspora, but his regulations would be as inapposite in Nairobi to-day as the regulations prescribed by Moses for camp hygiene in the Desert of Sinai are inapposite in the household of a pawnbroker in Manchester in midwinter. Islam, on the other hand, like the other great religions of Asia and the pagan cults, provides a complete and easily comprehensible set of social regulations, though it would be outrageous to place the same rating on the sanctions of a religion like Islam and those of pagan spirit-worship or fetish-worship. Opinions will differ as to whether the highest revelations of humanity are perishable or imperishable. But if the tenets of the Christian faith and the principles of Christian conduct are eternally valid, nevertheless on the admission of their accredited spokesmen they need reinterpretation for different generations and breeds of the human species. In the process Christians fall a prey to internal dissensions, and it may be doubted whether any Church except that of Rome has the organisation or the discipline to formulate a Christian code of social regulations for peoples without the Christian inheritance which belongs to Europe. In a meeting at the Albert Hall it may be comparatively easy to prescribe and carry resolutions in which expressions such as "Christian values" or "the Christian way of life" may not be devoid of content for the participants. It is a very different matter to recast domestic life in a

tropical village in accordance with Christian ideas of marriage or to interpret the Christian virtues of meekness and humility without affront to the legitimate authority of a tribal chieftain.

In African and Asian society a man cannot worship God in one way (or not at all) and remain in social fellowship with neighbours who worship God in a different way. Religion is inextricably interwoven with all the pursuits of mankind. Society has not arrived at a distinction between things sacred and things profane, between the spiritual and the temporal, the religious and the secular. This distinction, which in our society provides almost unlimited common ground on which persons of widely differing belief may meet in comfort, is one of the distinctive characteristics of Christendom. Its gradual achievement is one of the main themes in the history of western civilisation. Thus government and law, the arts and sciences, and many other departments of life lie outside the sphere of ecclesiastical authority and outside the routine of religious practice. A similar process is gradually taking place in parts of the Islamic world. Atatürk's successful secularisation of Moslem Turkey and Amanullah's subsequent failure to secularise Moslem Afghanistan are its most spectacular manifestations. But within the Dependent Empire the spread of secularising influence in Moslem areas may be slow. In those areas, as well as in pagan areas, religious ideas and practices are so much an essential part of life that Christianity still appears in the guise of a frontal attack on the established structure of society.

Thus the effect of missionary enterprise, when successful, is to detach Christian converts from the society to which they belong and to create a nucleus of "marginal" Africans or Asians. Christian missions have not failed through lack of generous and zealous support in this country, even if such support has never been very widespread. In the mission field, their activities are generally

looked on without enthusiasm by the majority of the British exile population, not excluding some of the more assiduous church-goers. This lack of enthusiasm, which is more pronounced in Moslem than in pagan areas in tropical Africa, is due to an instinctive conservatism and to a vague uneasiness about the effects of detaching natives from their social moorings. Ancient prejudices also play their part. In their palmy days British missionaries were by no means friendly or accommodating as a matter of course to their own compatriots outside the mission fold. In the European trader or settler they tended to see the corruptors and exploiters of the weaker brethren. To a trader or settler they themselves often appeared as misdirected zealots engaged in spoiling good natives and unfitting them for their place in an economy directed by European enterprise. These judgments were not always informed by Christian charity on either side, and though there has seldom been active opposition there has often been mutual antipathy between missionary and non-missionary. A smouldering feud has made missionaries quick to protest on occasion against the alienation of African land for plantation development and against the more coercive methods of recruiting African labour. But European enterprise owes much besides grudges to missionary effort. It has cashed in handsomely on mission work in education. If clerical work has been cheap and efficient in the strongholds of European commerce on the west coast of Africa, the missions are largely to thank for it. The funds of missionary societies have helped to lessen the cost of public administration and so to lighten the burden of taxation on European enterprise. The exertions of missionaries in the field and the generosity of their supporters at home have seated literate Africans, instead of aliens from Asia of a more costly variety, on many office stools in business premises and in government departments. For generations education in British tropical Africa was left almost entirely to

Christian missions, to the relief of British administration and the profit of commercial enterprise. Yet only a generation ago how many British exiles were wont to declare that they had no use for the educated native !

Neither the missions nor their converts are so conspicuous as formerly. There are other European agencies at work on parallel lines, making converts who resemble the converts of the missions on the surface, in speech, manner and dress. The spread of Christianity is, in reality, only part of a vaster movement which is carrying European civilisation, bag and baggage, into the non-European world. In this movement missionaries were among the pioneers and provided many of the shock troops. Because religion was their weapon and because religion is also the cement of non-Christian society, they were compelled to make a frontal attack on its structure. But secular agencies were at work simultaneously, and are now in the ascendant, less militant because more various, less conscious of any direct or single purpose, but no less penetrating because their methods are those of peaceful penetration. Indeed their infiltration is more insidious and more effective. The witch-doctor may have a more deadly antagonist in the surgeon or the bacteriologist than in the Christian catechist. We now stand committed to a progressive introduction of the arts and sciences of European civilisation into all parts of the Dependent Empire. The results are incalculable. But it may be assumed that not only Christianity but all the religions of the Dependent Empire will henceforth need progressive reinterpretation and that codes of social behaviour will undergo progressive revision. It is less easy to assume that the *Christian Churches will gain in numerical strength in the process.* But the *principle of religious toleration* is firmly established. The *conscriptio of mind and spirit* is no attribute of the British yoke.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FRENCH YOKE

No clues to the future of the lesser units of the British Commonwealth are to be found in the theory and practice of Britain's greatest imperial neighbour and her greatest imperial rival in the past. French imperialism has taken a different course from that of British imperialism. It is recorded of Clemenceau, who probably understood Britain better than any French statesman of this century, that when travelling in India after his retirement from political life some thirty years ago he was moved to contrast the British instinct for liberal behaviour in political matters with the French instinct for liberal behaviour in social matters. It is a hackneyed jest that the greatest compliment that an Englishman can pay to a foreigner is to tell the foreigner that he might pass for an Englishman. Certainly the most flattering judgment that an Englishman can pass on a dependent community is that it is fit for independence ; just as the most flattering judgment that a Frenchman can pass on a dependent community is that it is fit to become part of France. To bring the alien within the fold of French culture and social institutions and so to qualify him for incorporation in the one and indivisible France is the aim which has inspired French colonial policy. It is an aim which is arrogant in its assumption of the superiority of France in the arts of life ; but it is generous and humane in its racial liberalism and in the warmth and geniality of its welcome to all genuine proselytes.

The French Colonial Empire has thus been envisaged as an extension of metropolitan France with the main-spring of government in metropolitan France. It

exemplifies the French instinct for centralisation which is complementary to their proselytising instinct. History has been the natural accomplice of these instincts. France, like Britain, lost most of her original overseas Empire in the eighteenth century. Like Britain, she founded another Empire in the nineteenth century. But it was no far-flung Empire separated from France by the seas. It spread overland from the Mediterranean basin within short call of the home waters of France, although it spread far and fast right into the heart of tropical Africa and although geographically disconnected outlands like Indo-China and the island of Madagascar were added to it. France rediscovered the fascination of her Latin heritage in a new imperialism. She drove her highways into North Africa, *more Romano*, for her legionaries to spread conquest and for their camp-followers to consolidate the gains. And as she went, France trumpeted her summons to the vanquished barbarians and to her motley hangers-on to learn her language, to copy her gestures and to qualify for French status and citizenship. Her natural histrionic talent (the only talent which Bismarck was ready to concede to France) made her a perfect tutor of imitators. And at the back of her mind was the unadvertised thought that the new citizens would also swell the ranks of the legions needed to defend the frontiers of metropolitan France against the inroads of the other barbarians from beyond the Rhine.

In France control of the Empire is at the centre. There has been no pretence, as in the dependent British Empire in the past, and there has been no professed intention, as in the independent British Empire of the future, to legislate for colonies from the colonies themselves. In so far as the French colonies participate in the government of the Empire to which they belong, they do so through the metropolis. Some of the older and more advanced colonies elect representatives to sit in the Chamber of Deputies side by side with the representatives



of metropolitan France. It is as if Gibraltar and Malta returned members to the House of Commons in the same way as constituencies like North Somerset or West Derbyshire. The Chamber not only can legislate for the colonies, but it does so. This does not mean that all legislation passed by the Chamber is applicable in the colonies as a matter of course. Legislation has to be applied by ministerial decree unless it is expressly stated by the law that the law is intended to apply to the colonies. Many important laws are so applied. But the greater part of the legislation by which the colonies are governed is legislation which the Minister for the Colonies is empowered to enact by decree. Just as colonial interests are to some extent represented in the law-making body by representatives elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and in some cases to the Senate as well, by colonial constituencies, they are represented in the decree-making Ministry of the Colonies through important permanent councils with a distinctive constitutional status in which colonial members sit, and to some extent sit by election.

But very few representatives of the colonies, elected locally by popular suffrage, participate in the initiation and direction of colonial policy through the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate. The diminutive number of colonial constituencies established long ago has not increased. Local representation in the deliberations of the Ministry of the Colonies is selective rather than popular. It is true to say that the French Empire is largely subject to the government of a central committee. Control by the Ministry of the Colonies working in close partnership with permanent councils amounts to committee government. But the Chamber may at any time take a hand in legislating for the colonies, and responsibility for their affairs rests in the last resort with the people of France. Thus the position of the dependent peoples of France has not hitherto differed very substantially from that of the dependent peoples of Britain under Crown Colony

government. But the aims of British policy for the future are very different from the whole trend of French policy up to date. There is a whole world of difference between an autonomous and separate national existence for colonial territories and a merger in which metropolis and colony lose their separate identity. The logical French mind finds it hard to understand a relationship in which independence is not equivalent to secession. The British mind can feel, if it cannot explain, such a relationship.

The executive machinery by which the French Empire is administered pivots on a central inspectorate directly responsible to the Minister for the Colonies. This inspectorate, with its roving commission and its freedom from control by Colonial Governors in its peregrinations, is "the eyes and the ears" of the Minister. It is another illustration of the centralising instinct of the French as compared with the British, who are content that Colonial Governors should be the official informants and advisers of Whitehall as well as its principal executive agents in the field. In the French colonial civil service, which is entirely separate from the inspectorate, the other main impulse of French colonial policy is strikingly illustrated. Many of the key posts are manned by coloured persons. The fact that an African negro for long held office in Paris as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies is a striking example of the proselytising instinct of the French. The appointment of another African negro to a Governor-Generalship in French Africa is a still more striking example. In a colour-conscious world, afflicted by racial antagonisms, the racial liberalism of France is a noteworthy exception to prevailing sentiment. It is perhaps one of those anachronisms which from time to time appeal to the French with their keen historical sense; an anachronism perhaps as extravagant as the thought of a revival of the glory that was Rome with its goal of universal citizenship when Cæsar himself might

be born not on the banks of the Tiber, but on those of the Thames or the Tigris.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that French colonial policy has set off in pursuit of unattainable ends. Overseas France has not proved amenable to development as an extension of metropolitan France. The numbers of France's new subjects able or willing to qualify for French citizenship have not come up to expectations, in spite of the skill and vigour of French educational effort, the successful spread of the French language and resourcefulness in the association of a substantial *élite* of France's overseas peoples in all forms of public and private enterprise throughout the French Empire. Both individually and collectively assimilation has been resisted. Political ideas are more easy to export and disseminate than social practices and institutions. The social practices and institutions of France are not easy to inculcate either in African pagans, the majority of whom are under-civilised as judged by European standards, or in peoples of near-eastern or far-eastern stock with a vigorous civilisation which is not European. Hence resistance at both ends to the civilising mission of which France is proudly conscious ; resistance both from the " backward " and the " advanced," resistance both in the bush and on the *boulevard*. French legal concepts as applied to property, marriage, inheritance and a host of personal and contractual relationships are a particular stumbling-block to the assimilation of peoples of non-European antecedents and religion. Commercial and industrial practice, dominated by a sense of urgency in accommodating the interests of French investors and in closely riveting the French Empire to the fiscal system of the metropolis, have fostered the growth of colonial nationalism in overseas France. The cultural, as well as the economic imperialism of France is now under attack. In Syria, whence France has been constrained to retreat, an instinctive comprehension of French aims and methods was shown in the nationalist

slogans. The cry was not "Independence" or "Syria for the Syrians." It was "No more *bonjour* ; no more *au revoir*."

In the British Dependent Empire colonial nationalism is essentially politically minded. It is focussed on fitness for independence and for responsible self-government. In the French Empire nationalism is less political in sentiment. It is more virulent and more particularist. Its common denominator is a repudiation of French civilisation as the means of grace and the hope of glory—or of salvation. It would sympathise with the sentiment of a celebrated Victorian Francophobe<sup>1</sup> who felt certain that the words "Ici on parle français" were inscribed on the Gates of Hell. In face of the rising tide of colonial nationalism French policy has, not unnaturally, lost much of its former confidence. There are signs that it is seeking re-orientation ; that it is learning to curb its instinct for uniformity and centralisation ; and to envisage a French Union in which colonial territories remain associated with metropolitan France without either absorption or subordination. France seems more likely to borrow from British practice than *vice versa*. In the more technical aspects of government, which provide a more specialised but equally fruitful field for the deployment of French genius, British and French methods are already seeking co-operation, and this co-operation may lead to closer approximation in the direction of general policy. The revivalist of Imperial Rome may have something to learn from the Mother of a Commonwealth. The British yoke may be borrowed for the experiments of Britain's neighbours.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. B. Jowett, formerly Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

IN 1793 King George III of England, deeming it advantageous to enter into diplomatic relations with the Emperor Chien-Lung, sent a special mission to China. The British envoys had in their baggage, in addition to their official credentials, a choice supply of samples of trade goods calculated to appeal to the Oriental eye. But on being received in audience by the Emperor the diplomat-bagmen were mortified to find him unimpressed by "the strange and curious objects" which they exhibited. The Emperor observed that his people already produced within their frontiers all the commodities of which they stood in need, and judged that there was nothing to be gained on their side by intercourse with the remote and obscure peoples subject to King George III of England. It can be assumed that the Emperor's sentiments towards King George resembled those of Queen Victoria at a later date towards a Sultan of one of the lesser Malay states, for example, or a Paramount Chief from Barotse-land. The question whether King George had the right to insist, as his heirs and successors successfully insisted, not without the use of armed force when persuasion failed, on closer intercourse with China, is fundamentally the same as the question whether the British yoke is justified. The British yoke can neither be commended nor condemned as an isolated phenomenon. It must be judged as part of a larger historical process by which in recent times the peoples of Europe have used the economic initiative which science has put in their hands to create a world economy by which the destinies of all peoples are now largely governed. The economic crusaders of Europe no longer find their moral justification in the

conversion of heathen or infidel to the true faith but in the creation of greater material prosperity for all. Such, for example, was the moral justification of carrying industrial civilisation at the end of the last century to the lands in South Africa beyond the Vaal, whither the Boers had withdrawn with their herds to live their lives undisturbed after the manner of their forefathers and in a manner which they held to be acceptable to God. But when troublesome prospectors revealed the presence of precious metals in the lands beyond the Vaal, Cecil Rhodes was undoubtedly justified in demanding accommodation from President Kruger in the cause of "humanity and five per cent." On the fringe of the desert, where nature is harsh and mankind is sparse, a few sons of Ishmael may still be allowed the luxury, or the penury, of economic escapism unharassed by the enthusiastic crusaders of the gospel of humanity and five per cent. Common sense may agree, with some tacit reservations, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," so long as the kingdom of God is banished from this earth. Wealth may corrupt the individual citizen, though pulpits have ceased to resound with denunciations of the curse of riches for the edification of congregations obviously ready to submit to the curse with unflinching steadfastness. The injudicious distribution of wealth may demoralise communities. But few communities repudiate the pursuit of wealth as a collective aim, if only for the sake of survival in a predatory world. In a debate in the French Chamber of Deputies half a century ago, when a speaker was opposing a vote of military credits on the ground of national poverty, he ended his speech with an eloquent invocation to the forces of moral rectitude. "Great is the power of right," he declared, "and it must prevail." Clemenceau rose to his feet. "Then let us arm our divisions not with machine-guns but with bows and arrows." Prosperity is obviously a vital ingredient of

social strength, though not the only one. The peoples of Europe can justify the economic crusade which they have successfully carried all the world over, partly by colonisation but by many other methods as well, by a clearly demonstrable claim to have raised the general level of material well-being not only for themselves but for the peoples who have submitted to their economic initiative.

Among the latter are the peoples of the Dependent Empire. Not only are their representatives, or the more vocal amongst them, economical of applause, but the economic crusaders of Europe have themselves become self-critical. It is obvious enough that rewards have been unequal, but the means of greater equalisation are far from obvious. Between the class inequalities apparent in most national states and the inequalities apparent in the status of the peoples who participate in a single world economy there is a close analogy. There are managerial peoples and proletarian peoples. With the exception of the inhabitants of Malaya, the peoples of the Dependent Empire are proletarians. Their employment or unemployment, in the sense of economic opportunity, depends on the direction given to world economy by the managerial peoples. Within the short time during which the two have been in association, the proletarians have witnessed the spectacle of the managerial peoples shattering the economy of their creation by two catastrophic wars, bringing in their train the phenomenon of proletarian unemployment of which the history of Madagascar, to take an example outside the British Commonwealth, affords a conspicuous example. For decades French policy has been directed to the exclusion of any but French enterprise from Madagascar. For decades a great area of production, comprising the third largest island in the world, has stagnated for lack of capital, like an estate held not for development but for speculation. The islanders may well reflect ruefully on what might have been achieved in their island with a small fraction of the money spent on the

Maginot Line, perhaps the most colossal as well as the least durable monument ever erected to the folly of the European world, including the United States of America and Soviet Russia, and not to the national shortcomings of France and Germany alone.

To assure the proletarian peoples of their right to self-determination, in an economic sense, is no more than political clap-trap. But very questionable assurances of economic advance are readily given. It is true that with the march of science peoples are becoming less and less pegged down to special forms of production appropriate to special habits and aptitudes or to natural resources provided by immediate physical environment. Industries now shift from country to country and, at a cost, almost any industry can be made efficient in any surroundings. It is no longer a matter of physical fatality that the dependent peoples, in common with other proletarians, should be hewers of wood and drawers of water or, in orthodox economic parlance, producers of food-stuffs and raw materials while the managerial peoples monopolise the higher rewards of manufacturing industry. Human exertion, backed by astute and determined statecraft, has achieved prodigies of change in the economy of many national states. Many states have hoisted themselves up from proletarian to managerial status in world economy. But their promotion has only been possible through the readiness, amongst other things, of other managerial peoples, notably the people of this country during the nineteenth century, to provide finance, technical tuition and organising ability in abundance. Now the halcyon days of economic expansion are over. The resources of the managerial peoples, or of most of them, are heavily strained. Science may create wide economic options, but not unlimited ones, and the natural handicap of the proletarians of the Dependent Empire is a heavy one in any circumstances. In present circumstances it may be too heavy for any great economic advance. Neither does



parliamentary democracy among the managerial peoples improve the economic prospects of the proletarian peoples. It has tilted the weight of political power, both in this and other European countries, towards security of employment and expenditure on social services ; a combination of aims likely to restrict supplies of capital available for investment in undeveloped countries especially for undertakings likely to compete with the established industries of the managerial peoples. And it is only by more varied development than heretofore that the proletarian peoples can be raised to a higher economic level. Not many years ago a proposal was made for the establishment of a refinery in a sugar-producing dependency. A refining industry would have been a valuable adjunct to the economy of the dependency concerned. But the project was successfully resisted by the refining industry in this country on the ground that it would curtail employment. The interests of labour, no less than those of monopoly capitalism, may be threatened by colonial development on new lines. Even the capitalisation of large-scale development on the established lines of food production has its critics, as recent events have shown. The economic recovery of the managerial peoples in the post-war world might be better served by increased production nearer home through investment in mechanised agriculture and scientific fertilisation on ground which has long been devoted to agricultural uses than by more speculative projects in tropical Africa.

If further economic progress for the dependent peoples of tropical Africa is uncertain, the gains of the past, such as they are, are by no means securely won. On the contrary, they are only precariously held. The danger of economic relapse cannot be dismissed as a mere bogey. Material props are by no means solid. In Southern and South-eastern Asia there is a wide margin of wastage which is altogether lacking in tropical Africa. There are reserves of economic strength and habits of economic

self-preservation that it would take enormities of misgovernment to destroy. Southern Asia can afford misrule. It has thrived materially under extortionate and inefficient governments and under the depredations of gangsters and thugs. The resulting wastage may be appalling, but it is not ruinous. Hence the paradox, which western civilisation finds so incomprehensible and so intolerable, of prosperity in spite of public mismanagement. Tropical Africa, on the other hand, has not the economic vitality to withstand shocks. It needs very careful nursing. A short spell of extortionate or inefficient government would be fatal to its continued ability to earn even its present living. The recalcitrance of the cocoa farmers of the Gold Coast to make use of the scientific methods advocated and demonstrated by their European mentors for the protection of the crop on which the income of the Gold Coast mainly depends, is a discouraging commentary on African capacity for intelligent self-help. Left to the resources of their native wit and wisdom, and with only a rudimentary acquaintance with the technical accomplishments of the modern world, the peoples of tropical Africa might soon find themselves derelict in the literal sense of the word, disqualified even from proletarian rank in a world economy. It would be a mistake for Africans to assume that in tropical Africa, European interests would cling tenaciously to their economic foothold in any circumstances. European enterprise, including that of its Asian auxiliaries from India and Syria, sits lightly ; at any rate in West Africa. It is mainly commercial and so easily transferable. Neither is tropical Africa the only part of the world in which cocoa, or vegetable oil, or cotton, can be successfully produced. The managerial peoples would be able to write tropical Africa off without any sense of irreparable loss. Good government as they understand it, which now means first and foremost well-administered and adequately equipped public services, or "business government,"

which a shrewd rogue like Horatio Bottomley once felicitously adopted as his political slogan, is a condition of their continued economic concern. If British self-interest first brought British rule to tropical Africa, African self-interest, judged by material standards, seems to demand its prolongation. In tropical Africa, material prosperity and native self-government, though officially bracketed as conjoint aims of colonial policy, are not easily compatible. Seldom is this latent incompatibility so candidly revealed by an official authority as by the Governor<sup>1</sup> of Kenya. In December 1947 the Governor, with the object of allaying uneasiness in the minds of the white settlers in Kenya, described as fantastic ideas of the creation in Africa of an entirely African self-governing state. Ignoring the closer analogy of Liberia (which might have provided good material for his theme), the Governor likened the establishment of a self-governing African state to the creation in the United States of America of an autonomous Red Indian republic. In the judgment of its present Governor, Kenya is moving inevitably towards the creation of a new Dominion of the Commonwealth in which the British will for a very long time ahead be the controlling and directing force. Not only in Kenya, but in other territories of tropical Africa, whatever may be the direction of future movement, the retention by Britain of political control and direction is a necessary measure of insurance against immediate economic relapse. It is perhaps fortunate that in tropical Africa, as has already been suggested, any transfer of political power from Britain to a self-governing authority must stand adjourned until some agreement has been reached as to the constitution of the latter authority. This condition alone involves a lengthy postponement to self-government.

Elsewhere in the Dependent Empire there are neither the same obstacles nor the same deterrents to self-government. Most of the small dependencies in and around

<sup>1</sup> Sir Philip Mitchell.

the Caribbean Sea, as well as the Mediterranean dependencies and units as widely scattered as the Falkland Islands, St. Helena, Seychelles, Mauritius and Fiji, have a long history of close association with Europe and a strong tincture of European blood. Their accomplishments, standards and outlook, in spite of local peculiarities, are predominantly European. Their material achievement admits of little variation, either in an upward or in a downward direction. With the possible exception of British Guiana, not one of them is likely to spring an economic surprise on the world. They are of small account in future planning, either national or international. Their promotion to self-governing status within the Commonwealth would be innocuous to British national interests under present conditions, and there is little reason why they should any longer be subjected to the political and administrative control of the imperial government in their domestic affairs any more than Jersey or the Isle of Man. Only the solicitude of humanitarians and missionaries for the welfare of the weaker brethren in communities of mixed race, or the concern of the British Government to control the strategic resources of islands or strips of seaboard on trade routes, withheld self-government from them when the major colonies won that prize in return for the economic indifference of the mother country a hundred years ago. It has even been suggested that as an alternative to dominion status or to an equivalent measure of domestic self-government, some dependencies nearer home, like Gibraltar and Malta with their intimate association with the fighting services, might lose their identity as separate and self-contained political units and seek representation in the parliament of the United Kingdom at Westminster. As dominion is a term associated with the growth of new nations straddling whole continents, a sense of geographical decorum may discourage its application to such splinter states as the smaller and older dependencies, at least until the West

Indies achieve the dignity of a single confederacy, but the term Crown Colony is due for elimination from the political vocabulary of the British Commonwealth. In tropical Africa the term Protectorate, without its earlier associations of a vague division of sovereignty between the British Crown and African rulers, is apposite enough. African self-government stands adjourned *sine die*, and the major political issue, however awkward it may be to face it, is whether in the highlands of East Africa and in Northern Rhodesia political control should be entrusted to a small European minority, which will assuredly continue to press for it with the economic credentials of superior accomplishment.

British opinion may be tempted to think of a coloured empire, however widely scattered, as uniformly amenable to more or less the same principles and methods of imperial management. It is not easy to resist the tyranny of convenient precedents, and issues are comfortably simplified by equating the peoples of Asia and Africa in political contexts. The two continents call for a very different approach from Europe. Europe cannot claim over Asia anything like the same title to superior performance that both Europe and Asia can claim over Africa. The behaviour of Asia may often be repugnant to western temperament, particularly in its extremes of violence and inertia. But Asia has consistently contributed to the material productivity and spiritual welfare of mankind. Ugly portents like the exploitation of the gangsterism which is endemic in South-eastern Asia by a communism which is not endemic do not provide the leading clue to the destiny of Malaya in Asian hands.

The association within the British Commonwealth of a number of equal and independent peoples is a relationship which is the most unique creation of British political genius or the most signal gift of British good fortune. This association has recently been enlarged so as to include for the first time Asians as well as Europeans. It is capable of further enlargement and greater diversification.

## APPENDIX I

### COMMERCIAL POLICY

ANY attempt to judge the degree of comfort or discomfort which the Dependent Empire feels beneath the British yoke must take into account the commercial policy which weaves the dependent peoples into the pattern of world trade. In this, as in other spheres of policy, the subordination of the dependent peoples has been complete. When in the early nineteen-thirties special tariff measures were introduced to curtail the importation of Japanese textiles into the Dependent Empire, a Japanese protest to His Majesty's Government was met with the assertion that the administration of tariff matters rested with the various dependencies. The statement was disingenuous in the extreme. Some latitude might be allowed to the individual dependencies in minor details of tariff administration ; but certainly not a decision on any important issue of tariff policy. The measures against which the Japanese protested had been introduced at the instance of the imperial authorities, and the Japanese knew it. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has been, and still is, the arbiter of the commercial policy to be followed in each and every part of the Dependent Empire. His Majesty's Government has been the authority to decide whether free trade or imperial preference or some intermediate course should prevail ; what inter-imperial or international trade agreements should be applied in different dependencies ; what steps should be taken to secure the enforcement of such agreements. In all matters of trade policy any negotiations with any foreign state or any self-governing part of the British Commonwealth in which any part of the dependent Empire might be concerned have been conducted by His Majesty's Government in this country.

The principles of trusteeship as now professed demand that commercial policy shall be shaped so as not to subordinate the interests of the dependent peoples to the interests of others, including the peoples of this country and of the self-governing countries of the Commonwealth. If the full recognition of this

obligation is of recent date, so is its significance. Until the present century the commerce of the Dependent Empire as it now is was a very minor factor in world trade. Free ports like Singapore and Hong-Kong thrived exceedingly as distributing centres of a large trade, both regional and oceanic. Dependencies relying on production for a livelihood like the islands of Fiji and Mauritius and the West Indian dependencies had found the free-trade policy, so long and so enthusiastically applied by Britain in a world which largely resisted conversion to free-trade principles, a somewhat mixed blessing. But while the plantation system of an earlier epoch was wilting in small islands under the Union Jack and British capital, carried overseas on an outward wave of expansion, was almost transforming large parts of the world into an economic Empire under many flags, the Dependent Empire of to-day had hardly been acquired, let alone equipped with the productive outfit to bring it within the orbit of world trade. The first stages in the development of tropical Africa had barely begun by the eighteen-eighties. Malaya was hardly more advanced. From the outset in what are the main areas of the Dependent Empire of the present century there has been a close identity of interest between this country and the dependent peoples in the most important of all aspects of commercial policy. Production (or, if not production, the services essential to, and depending on, production) have been the creation of capital investment to which investors in this country have made the principal, though not the only important, contribution. Whatever the product and whatever the method of production, whether tea is produced for export by plantation development or vegetable oils by native cultivation, there are substantial interests in this country vitally concerned to secure the most advantageous sales of the product. These interests exert their influence to secure a commercial policy favourable to the productive output of the dependencies. They may be concerned to divert the export trade of a particular dependency into particular channels ; to manipulate it in this way or that ; but always with the same motive of securing advantageous sales for the product of the dependency. Opinions may differ as to whether the natives of the dependency are getting a fair share of the proceeds, but measures designed to secure the most substantial proceeds will be the aim of many vested interests in the United Kingdom.

The Dependent Empire, as has been pointed out, exports in the main agricultural raw materials and imports manufactured goods. In its export trade there is a bias in its favour in the United Kingdom, which is the result of circumstance. In its import trade there is no corresponding bias in its favour. The most advantageous markets of supply for the Dependent Empire, whether it imports the equipment and stores needed to expand or sustain production, or whether it imports consumer goods, do not as a matter of course lie in the United Kingdom or even within the Commonwealth. Britain has not the same interest in helping the dependent peoples to buy cheap as it has in helping them to sell dear. British manufacturers and British wage-earners need, above all else, high-priced markets for the sale of exports from this country. Manufacturers and primary producers in the self-governing parts of the Commonwealth need similar markets. The dependent peoples are neither disposed nor well able to provide such markets for British producers and manufacturers. What they need above all else is low-priced goods ; in other words not the goods produced at high cost by the industries of Western Europe and America.

This situation raises a real dilemma in the application of the principles of trusteeship. Its application in commercial matters cannot, of course, be treated in isolation from its wider implications in the whole field of economics, politics and protection in peace and war. In a commercial context the term trusteeship is inapposite. Trusteeship usually means a relationship into which considerations of profit or loss for the trustee cannot enter. But Britain and the dependencies are also trading communities, all participating in world trade in a greater or lesser degree, buying and selling, often from one another, as separate units outside any customs union. In these transactions they are actuated by the motive of profit which actuates all participants in commerce, whether world trade or street-corner trade. Britain's commercial policy in the Dependent Empire must be judged, in the main, by commercial standards ; in terms of pecuniary advantage or disadvantage to the dependent peoples.

The present century has witnessed a radical transformation in the processes of world trade. The former era of expansion has been succeeded by an era of restriction. After the age of free trade and economic internationalism—at least as the policy



acceptable to this country—the erection of trade barriers and the acquiescence of Britain is a largely protectionist policy. In the inter-war period the net of imperial preference was spread over much of the Dependent Empire, but not over all. In one important part of it commercial internationalism persisted at a time when the tides were running out against it. The first world war rekindled the dwindling flame of internationalism which made its headquarters at Geneva. It left the principal participants, or rather the victorious powers, with a sense of the need for mutual accommodation and for some demonstration of the solidarity which befits ex-allies. Tropical Africa offered the area where those laudable impulses could most conveniently find scope without provoking any outcry. It was no new *corpus vile* for international experiment. There was a tradition of internationalism in the commercial exploitation of tropical Africa which dated from the eighteen-seventies and eighteen-eighties when the colonial powers had become alarmed by the standing threat to European peace which their mutual rivalries had created. Before the first world war commercial privileges in favour of particular colonial powers had been curtailed by a series of treaties and conventions in a large area of Central Africa. An Anglo-French Convention had provided for the same tariff treatment on imports from France and from French territories overseas as on imports from British sources into Nigeria and the Gold Coast. Other international treaties were interpreted as conferring the same privileges on various other powers. These arrangements continued after the first war. The virtual result was to apply a policy of the open door to imports from most sources of supply. Commercial equality and unrestricted facilities for the trade of several powers were carried still further by international agreement in the region which includes Kenya, Uganda, Nyasaland and a small piece of Northern Rhodesia, while the system of mandates under the League of Nations brought Tanganyika and the surrendered German territories in West Africa within the area of commercial equality and unrestricted trade.

This prolongation in tropical Africa of an outmoded commercial internationalism is of special interest because it exemplifies how the same policy in the Dependent Empire can be disadvantageous to production and the export trade, but advantageous

to the consumer. Commercial freedom at least helped a large number of Africans to buy cheap, though it deprived them of opportunities for selling dear. The natives of Kenya, for example, could not be denied the cheap textiles and footwear of Japanese origin which in the nineteen-thirties were largely excluded from other parts of the Dependent Empire with the object of reviving the textile trade of the United Kingdom, which had suffered severely in the general depression at the beginning of the decade. It is probable that what Lancashire subsequently gained at the expense of Japan (and of the native consumer) in the markets of the Dependent Empire she lost to Japan in foreign markets. On the other hand there was little incentive in the same period to provide sheltered markets in the United Kingdom within the network of imperial preference for products from a part of tropical Africa where the grant of any reciprocal concession of a discriminating character was internationally illegal. A less direct but far from negligible disadvantage to production in a dependency which fails to discriminate in favour of imports from the United Kingdom, is the resulting adverse effect on capital investment from United Kingdom sources in varieties of undertakings conducive to successful production. In any event a sheltered market for their products is a vital need for the great majority of the dependencies under the present restricted conditions of world trade. A policy of imperial preference enables the United Kingdom to provide such a market, because the United Kingdom is able to absorb the full output of most of the main products of the dependencies, leaving no surplus to be disposed of in other unsheltered markets. Such products include major exports such as sugar, bananas and tobacco. The preferences granted in the United Kingdom were therefore of special advantage to dependencies like Trinidad, Jamaica, Mauritius, Fiji and Nyasaland. Other parts of the Dependent Empire, the principal products of which are in excess of consumption in the United Kingdom as, for example, the edible oils of West Africa, would do better to contract out of the system of imperial preference. Many imperialists feel that the British Commonwealth is somehow incomplete without a trade policy in which some uniform and unifying principle is found to prevail. They hanker after imperialism in some economic form. But neither a rigid system of imperial preference nor any other rigid tariff policy is

likely to be generally commendable. Much of the Dependent Empire has gained, and stands to gain in spite of some curtailment of chances to buy cheap, from reciprocal tariff preferences with the United Kingdom. Certain groups of dependencies might be better served by reciprocal tariff preferences with one of the Dominions, at least for certain products, on the lines of past trade agreements between Canada and the West Indies. Preferences on some products in a Dominion might be combined with preferences on others in the United Kingdom. There is no reason why imperial preferences should be claimed or granted wholesale. In the case of dependencies whose main products can be absorbed in the United Kingdom a sheltered market in the United Kingdom is, under present conditions, the first condition of a benevolent trade policy on the part of Britain. Other parts of the Dependent Empire, such as Malaya in particular, whose main products cannot be absorbed in the United Kingdom, would be better served by the support of the imperial authorities in bargaining for advantageous treatment in outside markets rather than by being held to some system of mutual preference with the United Kingdom from which, as hitherto, the United Kingdom stands to be the principal gainer. But the persistent need for all the dependent peoples of access to cheap sources of supplies of consumer goods is never out of the picture. If reciprocal concessions are demanded in the dependencies in return for the benefits of a sheltered market in this country, a benevolent system of reciprocity should avoid the erection of tariff barriers in favour of British goods in the Dependent Empire to the exclusion of the more essential consumer goods from cheaper sources of supply. The considerations which apply to the exclusion of cheap imports from this country do not apply to the Dependent Empire. Cheap imports, for example, are no menace to the local industries of the dependencies because, not being manufacturing countries, they are without large and valuable home markets for home industries. Moreover, they are indispensable to industrial morale in native communities and so to efficient production. If, as a *quid pro quo* for sheltered markets in the United Kingdom for bananas from Jamaica or tobacco from Nyasaland, shelter is given in Jamaica and Nyasaland to goods from the United Kingdom, the goods should at least be selected on a system of priorities in which the basic needs of the natives of

Jamaica and Nyasaland are taken fully into account. Motor-cars, quite obviously, fall in a different category from cheap cottons. In a parliamentary democracy like that of Britain the decision would turn on a whole multitude of factors ; the relative needs, both immediate and less immediate, of the motor-car and textile trades, and their ability to influence parliamentary opinion ; the energy and political " pull " of various exponents of various convictions, ideals and prejudices ; the effect of calculations and miscalculations of many different kinds ; and so forth. These would serve to show that commercial policy, even if the principle of trusteeship is not invoked, is never subject to orderly economic argument. It is inevitably confused by the perennial challenge of the relation between the good of each and the good of all, between individual well-being and the common weal, which elude any neat commercial calculations of profit and loss. Economic development in the Dependent Empire raises, of course, the same fundamental issues with special emphasis on the conflicting claims of immediate and remoter objectives. Commercially, the position of the Dependent Empire would be greatly strengthened in the long run if schemes under the New Deal, in spite of little promise of immediate return, could be directed with ultimate success towards the development of industries which would enable it to produce some of the goods needed to satisfy the more basic needs of its people. On the other hand some sacrifice might well be involved in schemes of obviously immediate advantage, and advantage to the United Kingdom, like the production of commodities calculated to earn or to save dollars.

It is early to attempt any strict judgment of British commercial policy or performance for the greater part of the Dependent Empire. Little more than half a century, including the calamity of two world wars, is a short and unpropitious start. Immense technological progress has been offset by the destruction of capital, the disturbance of established monetary systems and the dislocation of the mechanism of world trade. More comprehensive surveys of the natural resources of the Dependent Empire than have hitherto been undertaken may reveal a more promising endowment than has yet been disclosed. Industrial processes, if inducement offers, can at least be copied or reproduced in some form on fresh soil with increasing ease. It also remains to be

seen how far, in the immediate future, Britain will be free to orientate economic development and direct commercial policy without some degree of subservience to the requirements of American policy. It is a sign of the times when one of Britain's elder statesmen<sup>1</sup> speaks of the need for a British "Declaration of Independence" in his advocacy of the national policy which he holds to be best suited to post-war conditions. On a brief past performance of which the inter-war period provides the main test, no serious set-back in any more or less established form of production was sustained in any part of the Dependent Empire through any deliberate act of British commercial policy. The most signal instance of any such set-back was an ill-judged attempt to capture for British industry the manufacture of edible oils at the expense of Germany and Holland. The attempt was made shortly after the first war in an atmosphere of anti-German sentiment. To achieve the end in view discriminatory export duties were imposed on palm-kernels exported from British West Africa to foreign destinations. The measure was of short duration, but it lasted long enough to do mischief to native production in British West Africa without any substantial corresponding advantage to manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom. Other countries of supply speeded up the production of vegetable oils and other importing countries equipped themselves for manufacture. Holland and France, in particular, developed their overseas sources of supply in the Netherlands East Indies and French Africa. British West Africa was quickly undersold in important foreign markets. This attempt to divert the output of part of the Dependent Empire into particular channels for the benefit of British industry was not unprecedented. Early in the century a special export duty was imposed on tin-ore produced in Malaya and exported for smelting overseas. The original object was to protect a local smelting industry established in Malaya by preventing a newly established smelting industry in the United States from securing a virtual monopoly of supplies from Malaya and, as a result, a position of control over the production of tin-ore in Malaya. At a later stage tin-ore exported for smelting in this country and in Australia were exempted from the special export duty. Part of the export trade of Malaya was thus directed into special channels for the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. L. S. Amery.

benefit of a particular British industry. No harm was done to Malaya because tin-ore from Malaya, in the absence of other sources of supply, continued to be indispensable in a number of foreign countries, unlike the vegetable oils of British West Africa for which new sources of supply were promptly opened up. But the lesson of the failure of the experiment with vegetable oils was not lost. British commercial policy has since refrained from a method of manipulating the export trade of the Dependent Empire which can only succeed under conditions which now apply to few, if any, of the staple products of the dependencies.

The past history of commercial policy in the Dependent Empire is only a short chapter. It provides little more than a record of tentative experiments under changing conditions and a register of necessities inherent in conditions within the Dependent Empire which are not susceptible of rapid change. The test of British performance begins afresh in a world in which the conditions of the pre-war world have largely ceased to exist. And normal trade with the Dependent Empire has yet to be resumed with the abandonment of emergency methods of regulated trade by means of the control of imports into the Dependent Empire and bulk purchases of its products by official agency in this country.

## APPENDIX II

### THE LATEST PHASE

A SENSATIONAL element of insurrectionary violence gives a lurid colour to the latest phase of events in the Dependent Empire. Undoubtedly the disturbances which recently occurred in the Gold Coast and those which are still continuing in Malaya have more than a purely local interest. Both disturbances have one obvious, if superficial, resemblance. The more prominent organisers of trouble both in the Gold Coast and in Malaya have a common ideological tincture. The United Gold Coast Convention, which made the pace in rousing popular feeling against the Government of the Gold Coast, has advertised communist intentions. The Secretary of the Convention, Mr. Kwame Nkrumah, has declared its aim to be the establishment of a Union of African Soviet Republics. Communism is the political creed professed by the practitioners of insurrectionary violence in Malaya.

These professions need not be taken as evidence that communism is making strong headway in the Dependent Empire. Like many political creeds, and more so than most, communism is easy to export but difficult to transplant once exported. It developed in its modern form in urban Europe under the conditions generated by the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. It was the product of the factory and the workshop. It thrived in the miasmatic atmosphere of industrial slums. It has since been given an agrarian twist and taken root in rural surroundings, though none too readily. Its appeal is essentially to the economically dispossessed ; to an unpropertied and landless proletariat with only their labour to offer as a means of subsistence and deeply conscious of social injustice under the conditions of capitalist society. Its tenets have been expounded with dogmatic exactitude and compressed into a rigid economic catechism invested with the sanctity of holy writ. As the articles of this catechism have a direct bearing, at least theoretically, on the past, present and future of the Dependent Empire, their

logic is worth a brief summary. In capitalist society the persistent accumulation of capital leads to falling consumption, bringing in its train diminishing profits on investment and a consequent urge towards expansion in search of new sources of profit. Hence imperialist annexation of new territories by the governments of capitalist states. Thus the origin of colonial empires is expounded. At the same time the insatiable urge to open up new sources of investment for capital perennially threatened by falling consumption leads to competition between colonial powers which ends in imperialist wars. These wars accelerate the final and inevitable breakdown of capitalist society, which is already doomed to collapse in the social revolution to which capitalist society is inexorably moving through the exploitation of the workers in order to reserve to itself more and more of the surplus value of the products of industry.

The predicted social revolution has become an accomplished fact over a large part of one continent. It has supplemented a body of communist dogma with a system of communist practice. Practical communism means collective production and the elimination of private property (or at least of the private ownership of the means of production) and of private enterprise. Conditions in the Dependent Empire do not suggest a very ready welcome for communist practice. Though there is poverty galore, there is not the provocative juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, of the recipients of high profits on the one hand and of starvation wages on the other, which is the emotional dynamic of communism. There is no landless or land-hungry class of serfs to whom communism might offer the bait of spectacular agrarian reforms such as the expropriation of large-scale landowners. By far the greater proportion of the inhabitants of the Dependent Empire is engaged in subsistence cultivation, often on land collectively owned under some native system of land tenure, or on the cultivation of cash crops for export. Where a sense of individual proprietary rights has been highly developed, as it has amongst most cultivators of cash crops, the methods of collective production and of non-competitive sales to a public authority with a buying monopoly would most certainly provoke strenuous resistance. There is no large class of depressed industrial wage-earners aligned against plutocratic employers. Only a very small proportion of the inhabitants of the Dependent Empire



works for wages, and most wage-earners are employed by public, and not by private, corporations. Any serious experiment in communist practice would also have to reckon with the disastrous effects on economic development, and even on the maintenance of existing standards of production, of the inevitable closure of present sources of external capital.

But with practical and positive communism the Dependent Empire has, of course, only tenuous associations. It can be assumed that the Gold Coast enters little into the calculations of the organisers of international communism. Malaya more so, without doubt. In the distant Kremlin the eminences of the Communist *Curia* may take a certain interest in Malaya. The future of communism depends much on the spread of the gospel in China, and China spills over into South-eastern Asia. The aggravation of economic instability in Malaya is surely worth the bones of a few Chinese communists ; for the stability and tranquillity of Malaya is of vital importance in balancing the trade of capitalist Europe and capitalist America. Yet it is doubtful whether the successful raiding of suspect premises by the police in Malaya will bring to light anything so positive as blue-prints for the collectivisation of agrarian and industrial production. There have certainly been no reports of the discovery in the Gold Coast of plans drawn up by the United Gold Coast Convention for the liquidation of the African Kulaks of the cocoa plantations or of the African middlemen who batten on peasant production. Communism in the Dependent Empire is as yet a purely destructive force or a superficial communism of catchwords, drawing on a vocabulary from which it is easy to borrow without repayment in the coin of the risks and austerities of communist practice. When the slogans of the French Revolution provoked emotions and reactions similar to those which communist slogans now provoke, an Indian potentate hostile to Britain, like Tippoo Sahib, was ready to flirt with French agents and to let himself be addressed as "Citizen Tippoo." The professed attachment of that bygone potentate to the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity is no more remarkable than the attachment of Comrade Kwama Nkrumah, Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention, to the creed of communism. The clap-trap changes with the centuries, but not the antics of humanity. Colonial communism is a masquerade, disguising more powerful forces at

work. These are something more than the aggregate of the miscellaneous forces of discontent which arise from particular grievances such as are present, in a greater or a lesser degree, in all communities. During the present century there have been ugly disturbances on occasion in various parts of the Dependent Empire. But until recently most of them have been politically insignificant. Such disturbances have even occurred in dependencies in which political sentiment in the sense of consciousness of political status and the impulse to change existing political institutions was at the time inexistent. Some twenty-five years ago there was an outbreak of violence in Zanzibar where, by general consent, there were no politics. Malaya, now a political storm-centre, was not long ago the land of a delightful, or degrading, political inertia. In such an atmosphere the removal of the cause of a grievance or the redress of an injury was enough to restore the barometer to set-fair. To-day in the Gold Coast, on the other hand, hardships which revolutionary leaders are quick to exploit may be removed and law and order may be re-established, but the application of remedies no longer liquidates grievances in a political sense. Liquidation, in a political sense, is made impossible by the sentiment of nationalism which in the Gold Coast, as in most parts of the Dependent Empire, has become a pervasive force as implacable and irrational as all strong sentiment. It neither weighs the merits nor pardons the offences of an authority whose status frustrates and affronts it. By a curious irony British rule stands penalised in the face of colonial nationalism by one of its own outstanding virtues. Its scrupulous impartiality deprives it of the sympathy of any faction or the support of quislings on the make. If the British method had been that of "divide and rule," as alleged by some critics, colonial nationalism would not now be a force which thrives on every discontent and sublimates every act of local self-assertion.

Colonial communism is only a bastard form of colonial nationalism. But its elimination will do nothing to lessen the force of nationalism in the Dependent Empire. The disturbances in the Gold Coast, like most untoward incidents of a serious character in the Dependent Empire, were followed by the despatch of a special Commission to inquire and report on the spot. The conclusions of the Commission, apart from their recommendations for dealing with special grievances and difficulties of an economic

character, are striking for their recognition of the need for concessions to colonial nationalism. There is no sterile discussion of the fitness of the peoples of the Gold Coast for self-government. The disturbances are not produced as evidence of unfitness. A new standard of judgment is applied to the question of political development. A new norm is substituted for the customary appeal to some hypothetical estimate of worthiness or unworthiness for self-government based on a survey of social conditions and local performance in various directions. The present political status of the Gold Coast is accepted as unsatisfactory for the reason that it does not command popular support. This is a new approach to the political claims of dependent peoples. It is bolder than previous approaches. It recognises that government in the Dependent Empire finds its ultimate justification in popular support. But it is also a more realistic approach. It no longer ignores the emotional forces which must now be reckoned with in the politics of the Dependent Empire.

A summary of the report of the Commission<sup>1</sup> describes its political recommendations as "calculated to develop a pattern of government which will conform in some respects to the government in the United Kingdom. Apart from towns which will have their town councils, the affairs of rural areas in matters of purely local concern will be dealt with by an authority corresponding in some ways to a rural district council. Matters of wider regional concern will be dealt with by a regional council with an administrative structure not unlike a county council. The legislative body with parliamentary status will be the Gold Coast Assembly, functioning with a board of ministers acting as an Executive Council. Recommendations are also made for a forward policy of Africanisation in the public services." Subject to the proviso that the proposals should be for a probationary period at the outset, the structure has all the essentials of parliamentary self-government. The standard British pattern of responsible government is apparent in a board of ministers. This board is described as acting as an Executive Council. But a board of ministers responsible to the proposed parliamentary Assembly for policy and for the behaviour of the Departments of State which carry out that policy is a very different body from the Executive Councils characteristic of Crown Colony

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, 4th August 1948.

government. The latter consist, as a general rule, of the Governor, the principal civil officials, including the senior legal and financial officers, and the military officer in command of the troops in dependencies in which there is a garrison, with the addition in most instances of one or two of the leading unofficial members of the legislature. The Executive Council has no close counterpart in the constitutional structure of the government of the United Kingdom. It bears a closer resemblance to the Privy Council than to the Cabinet. Unlike the Cabinet, it has no power to initiate or direct policy on its own authority for the reason that the initiation and direction of policy rest with the imperial authorities in London. As a standing advisory body which the Governor is constitutionally bound to consult in all matters of importance it may make a modest contribution to the framing of policy by offering advice which is made known to the imperial authorities. It helps the latter to get an informed and authoritative view on measures under discussion. It thus reinforces the representative character of Crown Colony government. But it introduces no element of responsibility into Crown Colony government. So little is the Executive Council collectively responsible for measures introduced in the legislature of a dependency that its unofficial members are under no obligation to give such measures their support. In point of fact they often oppose or criticise in the legislature measures against which they register no formal dissent in the Executive Council. It would obviously be both unfair and illogical to impose on unofficial members of the Executive Council the obligation to uphold in public measures for which they hold no responsibility and, in the case of those who are elected members of the legislature, no mandate from their constituents. The main value of the Executive Council in the machinery of Crown Colony government is that it provides the means of permanent consultation and exchange of views behind closed doors between the official heads of the government and leading unofficial personages. In most dependencies powers of subsidiary legislation are conferred on the Executive Council. For example, many bills presented to the legislature include a clause giving the Executive Council a general power to make rules having statutory force for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the particular bill. The Executive Council also sits as a tribunal to deal with cases of misbehaviour on the

part of public officers. But apart from its judicial powers as a special court over members of the public service, it has no authority over the various departments of government in the conduct of administration. These departments, through their official heads, are responsible to the Governor and to the Governor alone. A board of ministers, responsible for policy and the conduct of administration, is thus a very different kind of body. Only responsible government will command popular support in the face of colonial nationalism. But responsible government in any part of the British Commonwealth under modern conditions also means representative government in the sense that all sections of the community are adequately represented not only in relation to their numbers and interests but in a manner acceptable to them. It is on this issue that the Gold Coast report is of particular interest, because it immediately encounters the most stubborn of all local obstacles to self-governing status in the Dependent Empire. Popular representation, as has already been pointed out, is the crucial difficulty. The report, with a boldness approaching temerity, challenges the view that the traditional leaders of African society, the tribal chiefs, are entitled to represent their peoples in a national parliament. The challenge sets sensitive nerves very much on edge. It arouses keen controversy and partisanship. Chieftainship has for long been the pivot of British administration in tropical Africa, where eminent political planners have tended to look upon the chiefs as the appropriate representatives of African peoples under popular self-government on a national scale. The authors of the report have been rebuked by persons whose ripe experience commands respect for their opinions. The official view is that the chiefs are still the accepted and only acceptable leaders and representatives of the great majority of Africans outside the towns where a detribalised society has grown up. At first sight the controversy appears to turn on a comparatively simple issue and one mainly of fact. If the official view, as distinct from that of the report, is the correct one, it might be concluded that the traditional chieftainly organisation provides ready-made M.P.s., as it were, entirely acceptable to their constituents for ready-made parliamentary constituencies. With rural constituencies returning chiefs to parliamentary seats it would only be necessary to blend urban constituencies returning unchieftainly and detribalised politicians to

build up a national parliament. But the difficulties of popular representation go deeper. The report disqualifies the chiefs as having forfeited popular support because they are looked on as reactionary stooges ; as the pliant agents of an alien authority. This is an old indictment ; one of the long-standing jibes of the African intelligentsia. But it touches only one side of the question ; and, lest chieftainship should be identified as a matter of course with subservience and reaction, it is pertinent to recall that a minor chief, with the support of other chiefs, took a leading part in organising the boycott of imported European goods which preceded the disturbances in the Gold Coast. More serious is a justifiable doubt whether the functions and attributes of African chieftainship are compatible with the discharge of such an entirely new part on the political stage as the representation of an African constituency in a national assembly. Native Councils may abound. Government by discussion and debate may be a familiar enough experience. Within his own local surroundings the authority of a chief may be circumscribed by the prerogatives of councillors to whom the chief must refer. But such restraints are part of the recognised political organisation of an established unit of society. The authority of a chief has long been circumscribed by the supervision of the agents of British authority. But African society understands and accepts the restraints deriving from conquest and from superior force. The situation is very different when a chief is translated to a national parliament in which he will surely find himself called upon to accept on behalf of his people, and against his voice and vote, majority decisions carried by groups of chiefs and others representing peoples with whom his own people feel that they have neither part nor lot. His capacity for political education will be put to a stringent test. And not only the chief himself but his constituents will have to learn the limitations of chieftainly authority in the national scheme of things. He will have to concern himself with matters unfamiliar to him in his chieftainly capacity. He will have to discover that the government of a modern state, even in tropical Africa, embraces far more than tribunals for the settlement of disputes or the punishment of offences, or the collection of a few simple taxes or even the more ambitious activities of a well-conducted local government body. His success will depend on the degree in which he is able to look beyond the immediate

concerns of his own constituents. In short, he will have to become detribalised, at least in his outlook. Political development, rather than economic change as heretofore, may well become the principal agent of detribalisation in African society in the future.

Until self-government in the Dependent Empire takes final and practical shape with a formal transfer of powers, spectators must be prepared for the occasional spectacle of colonial nationalism parading in the trappings of communism. The real tragedy of colonial nationalism, and also a cause of most baffling difficulties, is that it is not the expression of a national consciousness. It is the expression of an inferiority complex fortuitously shared by miscellaneous collections of peoples, mostly without any other close affinity, though it lacks nothing in vigour for that reason. Whole decades may pass without any transformation of nationalism into a healthy sentiment of national cohesion. The recent history of India is a good commentary of the complex character of the nationalism generated by British rule. The paradox of colonial nationalism is that, while it cannot be satisfied with anything less than self-government, it nevertheless shrinks from the practical reality of self-government because it is aware of deep internal dissensions which are disguised, or rather quiescent, under British rule. Hence the unpopularity of many a scheme for popular representation. Hence clamour and suspicion and partial political boycott when the threshold of self-government is reached in Malaya, where alien achievement has created a country for interlopers (including the great majority of the so-called Malay natives) to inhabit, but where a nation has yet to be made.

## APPENDIX III

### THE AFRICAN AGRICULTURALIST

ALTHOUGH the alignments characteristic of industrial society in Europe are apparent in varying degrees in most parts of the Dependent Empire, including tropical Africa, one outstanding difference between the African and European worlds is that in the former only a small minority lives by working for wages. Only in a few parts of tropical Africa are employers of labour, as a distinctive class, concerned with the question of incentives to work for wage-earners. A question of far wider concern is that of inducing Africans who live on the land to work harder and better for the mutual benefit of themselves and of a much impoverished world. There is evidence that considerable inducement will be needed.

That all men are by nature idle is about as true, or as false, as most general propositions as applied to human nature. In Europe, at least, work is widely accepted as a necessity both because of physical environment and because of the evolution and structure of a society which had decided to sanction exclusive and personal possession of property and the pursuit of individual wealth. The peoples of Europe have, in characteristic human fashion, made a virtue of necessity. Industry, with its significant double meaning, denoting both the disposition to work and the material evidences of human exertion, has become one of the leading social virtues. Idleness has become a vice. Even the snob value which attaches to idleness combined with affluence, so engagingly exploited by the frivolous genius of P. G. Wodehouse, is a posthumous tribute to past industry. Christianity, the religion of temperate or northerly climes where the earth yields her fruits only grudgingly in response to human toil, has sanctified work. *Laborare est orare*.<sup>1</sup> Only the Christian religion could equate the spiritual values of work and prayer. The outstanding achievements of a civilisation in which few escape strenuous exertion of mind and body, surpassing at least

<sup>1</sup> "To work is to pray."



in material performance the achievements of the slave-owning societies of antiquity and establishing its ascendancy over the whole contemporary world, have been more than sufficient to justify the cult of work. The servile associations of work and the degradations which surrounded it in the era in which Christianity originated have long since been obliterated. Religious sentiment in Europe and America finds it easy to echo the proverb of an industrious and talented people who declined to countenance slavery as a social institution in an age when it was almost universally accepted. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings."<sup>1</sup> The Christian religion has been as powerful a stimulant to the exertions of the successful in the pursuit of wealth as an opiate for more lowly toilers cheated of their earthly reward.

The religion of Islam, on the other hand, has never sanctified work and the followers of the Prophet have not made a virtue of the habit of industry. Islam has spread among slave-owning peoples who have only lately come to repudiate slavery as a social institution. To the more fortunate amongst its adherents wealth has come mostly without great individual exertion; while the less fortunate have been spared destitution through a religious and social code which is indulgent to mendicancy and prescribes the benefits of liberal charity for "God's poor." In most of the world of Islam climate and physical environment discourage the strenuous life. The desert defies human exertion. Away from the wilderness there are fertile lands where "many a garden by the water blows."<sup>2</sup> Islam has not taken deep root in tropical Africa, but its influence has filtered in from the East, and where it has penetrated its outlook has been congenial to pagan cults which, more often than not, have given a malignant aspect to work. Tropical Africa has also escaped the individualism of European civilisation, in which the urge to work has become irresistible with the lure of splendid rewards for the leaders and the devil of starvation at the heels of the laggards. African society, having failed to develop the idea of personal property, has also failed to inculcate in its members the idea of personal responsibility for subsistence and survival. The perennial

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xxii. 29. Quoted by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

<sup>2</sup> E. Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

threat of aggression is not conducive to individualism. And until lately the peoples of tropical Africa have lived under that threat. Hence a highly developed sense of collective responsibility for self-protection, focussed on war-like pursuits rather than on peaceable forms of production. Peaceable work has, of necessity, devolved on the women. Social distinction has surrounded the warrior-protector. In the rapid transition from chronic inter-tribal warfare to the compulsory tranquillity of the *Pax Britannica* (or its European equivalents in non-British territories) productive work has had no chance to earn social esteem. There has been no stage at which productive work has become necessary for self-protection. The warrior has been abruptly superannuated before feeling the need of the productive worker as his collaborator in the business of protecting the community against external enemies with the advantage of superior equipment because in command of superior productive resources. Tropical Africa has known only warfare determined by crude valour and crude weapons. The advent of the *Pax Britannica* (or its equivalent) forestalled the lesson, which Asians were quick to learn, that productive capacity under modern conditions is an essential ingredient of war-like strength.

Production on a much larger scale than before of selected food-crops for export is the task now allotted by its economic directors to tropical Africa, in addition to the continued cultivation of the crops needed by Africans for their own subsistence. To add the countries of tropical Africa to the already over-swollen list of food importers would be disastrous ; and however ingrained his aversion from work, the African must at least work enough to produce food for himself, if only by the use of his women as agricultural labourers. In the performance of this elementary task primitive and wasteful methods of cultivation have reduced the margin of safety to dangerously narrow dimensions. The threat of starvation may penetrate even the pastoral simplicity and isolation of tropical Africa and break up African society more ruthlessly than any external human agency. But so long as the African in the tropics is content to exist at a low level of subsistence it seems that only the exhaustion of the soil can readily stir him from his indolence and drive him to the effort of new practices and expedients. Then, and then only, would he have to work, and to work as never before, or starve. Until then he

need feel no compulsion to work any harder or any more skilfully. What is now demanded of the African land-holder is work that is largely new to him and, short of measures of artificial and highly organised compulsion, optional in character. Native cultivation of cash crops is, of course, no novelty. But the income derived has mostly been easy money. The crops have either grown wild or, if not, little field-work has been put into them. The present demand is for increased output, extended areas of cultivation, and, above all, protection against disease. New accomplishments and a higher standard of productive performance, both in quantity and quality, call for serious exertion. The African is invited to work harder for the sake of a better cash income. He must learn to want money for what money can buy. To excite his appetite is easy enough, but appetite must be gratified as well as excited, and consistently and abundantly gratified, if natural indolence is to be overcome. Plentiful and inexpensive supplies of consumer goods must be put within reach of the African agriculturalist. This is the only possible incentive to the production of the food-stuffs for which tropical Africa is now selected as an area of relief for world shortages. On the other hand, supplies of consumer goods from this, and from other countries where production costs are high, are neither plentiful nor inexpensive. To secure them for the African either by lowering the price of British goods for African consumption or by encouraging their output in countries of cheap production, involves sacrifices for the people of this country. These sacrifices are dictated by necessity. The European world cannot drive a hard bargain with African indolence, quite apart from any considerations of sentiment. For this reason not only must the African agriculturalist be able to buy cheap goods of a wide variety for the money paid for the production of crops for export, but a liberal price must be paid for these crops. The Overseas Food Corporation, for example, which now buys African food crops for export, cannot do so on the cheap, in spite of the obvious advantage to the consumer in this country, without giving immediate encouragement to the disinclination of the African to exert himself, to the probable disgruntlement in the not very long run of Mrs. Brown as she makes her way to the "Co-op" with the ration books of the Brown family in her shopping-bag. The battle against African laziness will be won

or lost in the next stage of the campaign in the conference rooms of the Ministry of Food and the Board of Trade in a much less cryptic and metaphorical sense than the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. Hitherto the African in the tropics has rarely seen productive work handsomely rewarded. There has been little in his experience to impress on him that such work is worth while. Native rulers, who are normally the most opulent members of African society, are observed to draw their revenues from sources apparently unconnected with any individual or collective form of exertion and controlled by a European authority. In native surroundings the possessions, the comforts and the amenities which make up this world's goods seem an almost exclusive perquisite of persons engaged in unproductive work, many of them aliens of whose good intentions the African has become suspicious. It is not surprising that, if he overcomes natural idleness, he tends to be drawn towards unproductive work. The bias of much of the education provided by his European tutors has drawn him in the same direction. It is a bias that is hard to correct in almost any society. If the sons of African farmers, having been educated in agricultural technique, prefer to become instructors and demonstrators rather than farmers, as happens in a deplorably large majority of cases, this is only a phenomenon which has its counterpart by the dozen in other countries all the world over. But in Africa it is more mischievous because its effects are not mitigated by counteracting influences. To induce the African to work to keep himself alive is a task which, in the last resort, can be left to nature, if and when circumstances come to lend urgency to the task. To coax the African to do more work, and better work, for the primary object of keeping alive millions of whose existence he is only vaguely aware and to whose fortunes he is generally indifferent, is a task which calls for the use of more powerful and more carefully selected incentives than have hitherto been applied. Practical generosity as well as benevolence will be needed in European dealings with Africa if the cupidity, which in common with idleness the African shares with the rest of us as part of mankind's original sin, is to be refined into healthy ambition so that the idleness becomes a reproach.



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